THE INDIAN HERITAGE

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AN ANTHOLOGY OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

Selected and Translated by

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UNESCO COLLECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS
(*Indian Series*)

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE
6, NORTH PUBLIC SQUARE ROAD
BASAVANGUDI, BANGALORE 4
INDIA



Printed at the W. Q. Judge Press by M. Narayan,
International Book House (Private) Ltd., Bangalore,
and published by The Indian Institute of World Culture,
Bangalore 4, India.

MOTTO

"... Behold, It is the breath of this great Being,— this Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, Itihasa, Purana, the secret exercises, the secret doctrines, the verses, the aphorisms, the exegetical and recommendatory texts, all these are the breath of this Being only."

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, II. iv. 10

FOREWORD

There are three outstanding features of India's cultural and social life. First, its fundamental unity in the midst of the baffling diversity; second, its capacity to absorb and adjust; and third, its power to survive and consequent continuity.

The physical and geographical entity known as India lies between the high Himalayas in the north and Cape Comorin (Kanya Kumari) in the south, and the two seas on the east and the west. Within this territory live today more than 360 millions of human beings who profess and follow all the known and existing religions of today, who speak, apart from the innumerable dialects, at least twelve well known languages, each of which has its own literary style and literature, whose mode of dress, life and food differ considerably from each other, and who, to a foreign observer, would appear to be altogether different from one another. Yet, in spite of all this truly baffling diversity, there is running behind and beneath it a fundamental unity which at once distinguishes an Indian from any foreigner and which, though not easily explained or understood, is none the less real and living. That unity has remained intact and uninterrupted during the millennia of which any record is available.

This culture is a composite culture in the sense that, although in the ultimate analysis, it is Indian in origin and can be traced to Indian origin in the main, it has not hesitated to absorb whatever came in its way from other lands and other peoples in its long and chequered career. Thus, in the languages, in the religions, in the life, customs and traditions of the people, there has been a continuous flow and intake from outside. Whatever has come in its way has been absorbed and assimilated and has become part and parcel of its own inheritance. It has not remained as a mere adjunct or addition, but has become an unrecognisable part and parcel, a true accretion. This power of absorption

and assimilation is as live and active today as it was ever before.

Lastly, it has shown an amazing capacity of survival and continuity. India has had a most chequered political history. Until the establishment of the present Republic of India, it has remained divided into a number of political units, large and small, despite the existence of what may be termed as an empire from time to time. Whether it was during the time of the Hindu Rajas or the Muslim Badshahs, there were many principalities, each more or less independent of every other, and all owing allegiance of a sort varying in degree from State to State to the Central authority of the Chakravarti, Raja or the Shahanshah, and not a few covering large tracts having not even that slender connection. During the British period also, nearly a third of the country was ruled by Indian Princes whose States varied from a few square miles in extent to the size of one of the larger countries of Europe except Russia, although they owed allegiance to and were under an overall effective but not obvious control of the suzerain power. It is only now for the first time that in the whole of the country minus the portion cut out and known as Pakistan the writ of one Supreme Parliament runs and the whole country is governed by one Constitution on modern democratic principles. It has faced and often succumbed to many foreign invasions and submitted to foreign rule, but its social and cultural life has remained intact and, instead of being damaged or destroyed by these violent impacts, has been enriched and endowed with strength to develop and grow.

The fundamentals and basic concepts and ideals of this varied and death-defying culture are enshrined in the literature which has come down for many centuries. It is for people versed in learned lore to determine the number of centuries or millennia which have passed since the composition or rather utterance of the earliest *mantras* of the *Vedas*, the composition of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and again between the latter and the Puranas, and lastly between the latest of the Puranas and today. One thing is clear. There is a continuity which is truly amazing, and that

continuity is to be found not only in the vast literature in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali but also in the modern regional languages of India. The source and inspiration of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti can be traced to the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and all that preceded them, no less do the songs and music, the story and background, the inspiration and even the descriptive imagery of a Rabindranath, Maithili Sharan Gupta, Dinkar or Mahadevi, to mention only a few known to me personally, derive from the same inexhaustible source.

That fundamental unity is based on the positive, though negatively expressed, principle of *Ahimsa* which manifests itself in the positive form of tolerance enabling solution, assimilation and absorption of foreign sentiments and ideals in its own context. It is not without significance that the Muslim Urdu poet of the nationalism of pre-partition India has sung in his *Hindustan Hamara*:—

"Greece and Egypt and Rome have all disappeared;
But our name and distinction have remained intact.
There is something on account of which our entity or identity does not disappear;
Although time has remained hostile to us for centuries."

If one dare peep into the future, one can say that the horoscope of this exquisite and composite culture is not yet exhausted, and it may, in the future as in the past, furnish in its own humble way the technique and practical experience of binding in unbreakable but soft and silken cords of active love and tolerance nations and countries differing and separate from one another not only by mountains and seas but also by passion and prejudice. It can very well do that because its ideals and concepts are universal in their application and not limited either territorially or by time or by any other limiting factor.

It is, therefore, a happy idea of the Unesco to bring together and exhibit in a convenient form gems from the vast and varied treasure of Sanskrit. I commend this selection to the attention of all interested in a study of this ancient but ever young culture. Dr. Raghavan has made a

representative selection and given, I believe, a literal but by no means dull or dry rendering and has succeeded in bringing out in no small measure the beauty and charm of the original.

Rashtrapati Bhavan
New Delhi
6th October 1935.

RAJENDRA PRASAD

AUTHOR'S PREFACE
TO THE FIRST EDITION

In this anthology entitled *The Indian Heritage*, I have presented renderings and narrative accounts of selections from Sanskrit literature. In making the selections, I have concentrated on those early phases of Sanskrit literature which were responsible for the moulding of the concepts and values and for the formation of the attitudes and ideologies that are fundamental to Hindu culture. In substance and message, the later phases of this literature are but an extension of the earlier; in divers media and with variation of emphasis, the poem or play and the school of religion or philosophy, in later times, but reinforced and elaborated those basic ideas embodied in the primary texts. These later phases, not represented in the main anthology, I have dealt with in the Introduction, where I have shown also the proper perspective for evaluating them.

For the appearance of this anthology in its present form in the Unesco's collection of representative works, I am indebted to the authorities of the Unesco, particularly to Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor, Madras University, and Chairman of the Executive, Unesco, and Mr. P. N. Kirpal, Deputy Director of Cultural Activities, Unesco. To Professor H. G. Rawlinson, London, and Mr. H. M. Barnes of the Arts and Letters Division, Unesco, I desire to express my thanks for their reading the typescript of this work and offering many suggestions. My gratitude is due to the Indian Institute of World Culture for the readiness with which it undertook to print this work and bring it out in time for the Delhi Session of the General Assembly of the Unesco, and to the William Quan Judge Press, Bangalore, I am much beholden for the care and expedition with which the work was seen through the press. I must also record here my obligations to Professor Kenneth Morgan of the Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, and the Ronald Press Company, New York, for permitting me to utilize for the present anthology some material

contributed by me to their publication *The Religion of the Hindus* (1953).

To the revered President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, I tender my most respectful thanks for the Foreword he has contributed to this book.

V. RAGHAVAN

PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

It is one of the objects of the Indian Institute of World Culture to publish such pamphlets, brochures and books as foster the aim of the Institute which is to elevate the mind of the race without distinction of caste or colour, creed or religion, and bring about a unity of thought and feeling among the nations and communities of the world. Of such a nature is the present volume prepared by our esteemed friend, Dr. V. Raghavan, whose labour of love in the sphere of Sanskrit studies is well known. We are glad to publish this volume and thus support the cultural work which the Unesco is doing.

The manuscript has been carefully supervised under the ægis of the Unesco. Dr. Raghavan has been good enough to proof-read the volume with care. The printing and publishing had to be speeded up as the volume was required for the International Unesco Conference which is meeting in Delhi shortly.

We must offer our thanks to Mr. P. N. Kirpal and other officials of the Unesco in Paris. We must express our thanks also to the author, Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Sanskrit, University of Madras, Member of the Council and Convener for Sanskrit, the National Academy of Letters, Delhi, and author of over twenty books and two hundred and fifty research papers, for his continued co-operation in our work.

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE

October 16, 1935.

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INTRODUCTION

The selections, renderings and narratives presented in this anthology are from Sanskrit, which Sir William Jones who rediscovered it for the West in modern times described as a language "of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either." "Since the Renaissance," says Professor A. A. Macdonell in his *History of Sanskrit Literature,* "there has been no event of such world-wide significance in the history of culture as the discovery of Sanskrit literature in the latter part of the eighteenth century." This "light from the Orient" directly led to the formulation of four important branches of scientific study in modern times, Comparative Philology, Comparative Mythology, Comparative Religion and Comparative Literature. The comprehensive Indo-European outlook and the spirit of comparative study which these studies fostered may legitimately be considered the harbinger of the expanding world-wide view which is today sufficiently pronounced to hold the promise of a one-world ideology. From Schopenhauer who saw in the Upanishads the solace of his life and the solace of his death and Emerson in the New World who sang of the Brahman to T. S. Eliot and Aldous Huxley, the influence of Indian thought on writers, critics, thinkers and even scientists in the West has been steadily, though slowly, growing, so that one can truly claim for Sanskrit culture a world significance at the present time.

It is in fact this spiritual culture, that has gained for Sanskrit today a world-wide vogue, which has been its distinctive feature from the earliest times of its history.[1] Sanskrit, with the spiritual culture enshrined in

[1] Egyptian, Jewish, in fact, all ancient literature and art are re-

that language, has been the most potent force that had welded the whole of the Indian subcontinent into unity. Sanskrit, from whose literature these selections, renderings and narratives are given, is the eastern-most branch of the family of languages called the Indo-European, whose members are spread over a vast area from India in the East to Ireland in the West. The transparent structure of Sanskrit, the minute analyses made by its early grammarians and the conservatism with which the language had been preserved through the centuries made Sanskrit an inestimable tool for the modern linguist to reconstruct the history of the parent and member languages of this great Indo-European family. In India, Sanskrit has had an unbroken history for at least four thousand years, during which period the language gave birth to a rich literature, comprehending many branches of knowledge and varied forms of literary expression.

The earliest phase of Sanskrit is represented by the Rigveda in which we find the language more archaic than that of the later works. Three main stages are clearly distinguishable in the history of Sanskrit, the Vedic, the Epic and the Classic. The Vedic Sanskrit, which was characterised by a pitch accent, was rich in both dialectal and grammatical forms; the Epic language was easier and closer to the spoken tongue; out of these, by a process of selection and standardisation, was evolved the classical idiom called *Samskrita,* meaning the "refined" language. This classical norm was the result of the work of a succession of early grammarians the greatest of whom was Panini (*c.* 500 B.C.); it was also the result of the creative activity of generations of poets, the foremost of whom is Kalidasa (*c.* 4th century A.D.). The great Classical Age which produced the masterpieces in poetry and drama and the technical and philosophical

ligious, but the special feature of Indian culture is that this quality has endured to this day as its most essential characteristic.

works may be said to extend roughly up to *c.* 1000 A.D. During this period Sanskrit, which had lost its accentuation, was steadily falling out of speaking vogue, with however its prestige and authority progressively waxing. In the literary field, the early Vedic dialects had given birth to different spoken forms, in the different localities, called Prakrits, two of which were adopted by Buddhism and Jainism, and two others especially were used for lyric poetry and parts of the drama. When these Prakrits again became standardised by literary use, there arose the new Indo-Aryan vernaculars from which the modern North Indian languages developed. In the course of this history Sanskrit came in contact with three other families of languages on the Indian soil, and between them and Sanskrit there was, naturally, a process of give-and-take. The chief of these other language-groups is the Dravidian in the southern part of the country, and, in all its four cultivated forms and the literatures that grew up in them, there was a permeation of Sanskrit, resulting in an overall cultural synthesis which consolidated the country. Whether it was in the Sanskrit-born Northern dialects or in the Dravidian languages of the South, it was the same fundamental religious tenets, philosophical outlook and conceptions of values expounded in the Sanskrit classics that the poets and saints of the popular tongues embodied again and again in their poems and songs. It is from the Sanskrit epics that all later Indian poetry, in Sanskrit itself or in the regional languages, drew its inspiration; and again, it is on the same foundation that the arts of dance and drama, sculpture and painting are based. Thus this Sanskritic culture in its own as well as its derivative phases is of equal significance to India itself, particularly in the present transitional stage of its history when men, swayed by conflicting ideologies, start behaving like people devoid of a heritage.

VEDAS

The Vedas, which form the bedrock of this cultural heritage, are not less remarkable as poetry and literature than as the foundations of the religion and philosophy of India. By reason of this as well as of their extent and variety, they far outshine any literary remains of antiquity surviving in cuneiform or hieroglyphic, in clay tablets or papyrus, in Asia Minor or Egypt. The completeness of the picture they give of society as well as of religious thought has, as A. A. Macdonell says, no parallel. By interpreting astronomical data some scholars have tried to show that Vedic literature is as old as 4000-6000 B.C.[1] But as M. Winternitz says,[2] whatever the soundness of these speculations, the internal evidence itself of the history of the growth of Indian literature and culture presupposes an antiquity of a few millennia before Christ: Firstly, it is no primitive or merely colloquial tongue but a language that had undergone long cultivation that we see in the surviving Vedic hymns; the diction shows sophisticated handling by self-conscious poets, who, apart from using it with effect, introduce into it changes or licences caused by poetic exigencies,—a language as complex and evolved as the sacrificial rituals for which the literature was used. Secondly, Buddhism and Jainism, as they rose between 750 and 500 B.C., presuppose Vedic literature, including the Upanishads. Thirdly, the archæological discoveries at Boghazkoi in Asia Minor show that the Vedas were earlier than 1400 B.C.; in the clay tablets discovered at that place, the Vedic gods Mitra,[3]

[1] *E.g.*, H. Jacobi of Bonn and B. G. Tilak of Poona and recently P. C. Sen Gupta of Calcutta.

[2] *History of Indian Literature*, English Translation, Calcutta, pp. 299-310. Some modern scholars however are inclined to about 1500 B.C. as the probable date of the earliest hymns.

[3] The fleet-winged sun-disc which the Veda describes as Suparna, Garutman and Tarkshya Arishtanemi (See below, Text, pp. 4, 36) was the very emblem hovering over the head of the Hittite Kings. "The symbol

Varuna, Indra and Nasatyau are mentioned in the treaties concluded between the Hittite and Mitanni Kings. The phonetics of these names as well as the numerals mentioned in a Hittite text on chariot-racing describing horses in a language very akin to Sanskrit, show that these belong not to a proto-Indo-Iranian period or to pockets of their folk left behind by the Aryans advancing eastwards, but to colonies of Sanskrit-speaking Aryans who had migrated westwards from their Indian home. Similarly, among the Kassites who ruled over Babylonia in *c.* 1746 to 1180 B.C., names of princes have been found which are Sanskritic. Fouthly, in the Vedas themselves, references to the text being handed down orally in families, the disappearance of schools (*Sakhas*) and the specific mention of hymns by the ancient as well as modern seers go to show that the antiquity of the Veda went much beyond the second millennium B.C. In fact, it is this reference to generations of seers handing down their knowledge to their successors in an unbroken line of teachers from time immemorial, that Indian traditional interpretation would emphasise.

The word *Veda* means knowledge; *Agama,* another term applied to it, emphasises the unbroken traditional flow of this knowledge; *Sruti* by which the Veda is also commonly known means "what is heard" or "revelation." In age after age, Seers (*Rishis*) "see" by the power of their intuition this eternal body of knowledge and expound it for the salvation of the world. The word *Rishi* is derived from a root meaning "getting at" or "knowing." It is in the families of these seers, their sons, pupils and successors, that this knowledge had been preserved; all Hindu families trace their descent to the *Rishis* and

seems to have been adopted by the Kings of Mitanni and to have been assimilated to a concept of a winged sky derived from their ancestral home on the borders of distant India." pp. 211-2, ***The Hittites,*** by O. R. GURNEY, (Pelican Book.)

every Hindu receives his initiation into this knowledge from his father or teacher. The teacher is thus the vital factor and in one of the Upanishads (Chandogya, vi. 14. 2), it is stated that "he knows who has a teacher." In the further phases of its development Hinduism not only presents God Himself (*e.g.*, Siva-Dakshinamurti and Vishnu-Parthasarathi) as Teacher but the Teacher Himself as God.[1] The Yoga Sutras[2] define God as the prime Teacher.[3]

The hymns and utterances of the Veda are called *Mantra* which means that which has been thought out and known, or is communicated in confidence or has the power to save one's soul. Thus the basis of the *Mantra*, in respect of its origin as well as use, is that intense thought or deep meditative austerity called *Tapas*. The *Rishi* saw the *mantra* in *Tapas* and it is in the same silent meditation that the aspirant renders it alive and fruitful for himself. Hence the *Rishi* or one engaged in such effort is called a *Muni*, one absorbed in silent thought. Another designation which the Vedic seer shared sometimes with God Himself is *Kavi*,[4] maker, creator, one endowed with far-reaching and penetrative vision. *Kavi* became, pre-eminently, the name of the poet and later literary criticism did not fail to draw inspiration from this early equation of the Seer and the Poet, *Rishi* and *Kavi*, the former name signifying intuitive perception and the latter, perfect expression.

As poetry, the Veda takes also the appellation *Chandas*. The *Rishi-Kavi* to whom we owe the Veda was a poet aware of his power and he realised that his speech

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[1] See below p. 445.

[2] Translated below; see p. 142.

[3] The teacher is called *Acharya* and the word is explained through three etymologies as one who collects the precepts, puts the students in the proper path and himself practises what he preaches.

[4] Cf. the English word "poet," whose root-meaning is also "maker."

was a God-given gift (Rigveda viii. 100. 11); he refined this speech in his mind, like the flour in a sieve (x. 71. 2), and wrought out of it a hymn as the vehicle for the God he sought, comparing his creative skill to that of a craftsman chiselling and fitting out a fine chariot[1] (i. 61. 4; 130. 6). Speech so invoked by him unfolded her charms to him, her chosen master, even as a loving spouse, her graces to her lord (x. 71. 4); having chosen him as her medium, she made him indeed a formidable seer and a man of outstanding intellect (x. 125. 5). Thus did the Vedic Seers' utterances become the first poetic creations, couched in metrical form (*Chandas*). *Chandas* means "metre" but signifies much more; the Vedic bard looked at his own metre, fell under its spell and revelled in the many high suggestions that arose in the wake of his reflection on it; as the vehicle of a hymn to God, *Chandas* served for man as a cloak to cover his sins, and for gods, as a shelter and an asylum; *Chandas* meant also wish and aspiration; its seven[2] chief forms stood for the seven mystic syllables (*Vyahritis*) and the seven worlds denoted by them.

The literary merits of Vedic poetry are quite conspicuous. In handling metre or language, in the expression of striking fancies or telling similes, in graphic descriptions of natural phenomena as in the hymns to Dawn and Night or in the embodiment of abstractions and

[1] The chariot-race was the leading pastime of Rigvedic times; another game that was indulged in was dice whose sad effects are not only sung in the gambler's hymn in the Rigveda (x. 34) but also featured in the tragic epic stories of Kings Nala and Yudhishthira; see below the section on the Epics.

[2] Seven are the more important among the fourteen Vedic metres; of these seven again, the most frequently used ones are *Gayatri, Trishtubh* and *Jagati* of 8, 11, and 12 syllables to a line respectively. Each stanza has four lines and generally a hymn is made up of a series of stanzas in the same, but sometimes in more than one metre. The greatest *Mantra* of the Veda, the *Gayatri,* meaning 'She who saves the singer' is named after the metre of the prayer.

speculative conceptions as in the cosmogonic hymn,[1] and even in the introduction of verbal assonances, the Vedic Rishi shows himself definitely a poet, and an able one at that. Nor is his power of observation and delineation of the workings of the human mind less remarkable. Many similes and poetic features in later classical poetry, down to the habit of varying metre at the end, can be traced to the Veda. The fact that besides the bulk of the hymns of religious and sacrificial significance, there are, in the Rigveda, hymns for domestic rites, mythological poems, dialogues, panegyrics of kings, didactic verses and sidelights on social activities, occupations and recreations invests the picture of the age presented by the Veda with a certain completeness. As A. A. Macdonell observes, it contains much that is of æsthetic value and well deserves to be read, at least in selections, by every lover of literature.

The poetic quality of the hymns becomes a natural element when we consider the nature of the deities praised in them. Many of these are personifications of the divine forces behind natural phenomena. There are thirty-three of these, falling into three groups, of the heavenly, the atmospheric and the terrestrial regions, some of whom have their counterparts in the mythology of the Indo-European peoples. Indra, the chief of the gods of the atmosphere and associated with thunder, claims the lion's share of the hymns; in his personality of power, heroism and victorious exploits, we see the embodiment of that heroic age. Next to him comes Agni or Fire, the friend of man who conveys all his offerings to the upper world. The phenomenon of light, from glimmering twilight to the blinding blaze of the Sun and its progress across the skies kindled the imagination of the Vedic bards who adored light in the form of numerous solar deities, Ushas and the Asvins of the Dawn, and

[1] Translated below; see p. 17.

aspects of Surya (the Sun),—the stimulator of life called Savitar, the friendly Mitra, the brilliant Vivasvat, the preserving and nourishing Pushan, the wide-traversing and pervasive Vishnu. In fact, of that spiritual effulgence (*Brahma-varchas*) which one seeks with the help of the Veda, Fire and the Sun became the very symbol; there is hardly a rite in which Fire is not propitiated; and it is the Sun as Savitar that is adored in the greatest of Vedic *Mantras*, the *Gayatri*. The conceptions of heaven and earth as father and mother, of an all-comprehensive Mother Goddess Aditi, of many faculties, abstractions and qualities of head and heart,—Speech, Faith, Intellect, etc.,—as deities, the adoration of divinity as such without a name, the growth of dual and omnibus deities, —these are to be noted not only as the more important features of Rigvedic mythology but also as landmarks in the further development of philosophical thought. These gods the ancient seer invoked with the Vedic hymns and propitiated with oblations of the inebriating juice of the *Soma* and clarified butter poured over the sacrificial flames. There were several sacrifices which he thus offered; the greatest of these is the Asvamedha, the horse-sacrifice performed by kings, which in some form prevailed among many ancient Indo-European peoples.

The recital of the Veda, especially in a congregation as in these sacrifices and rituals, produced a heightening of the spirit. This exaltation is aided by the threefold[1] musical accent which characterises Vedic Sanskrit and whose correct enunciation is insisted upon. The text of the Veda is absolutely sacrosanct and as the imperishable word breathed out by God, it was the source from which the entire objective world emanated.

The religious thought of the Veda is not taken up wholly by sacrifice and ritual. Not only is morality

[1] The raised or acute (*udatta*), the unraised or grave (*anudatta*) and the sounded or circumflex (*svarita*).

stressed as part of the personality of the divinities but there was also the conception of the Moral Order called *Rita*; and, of the deities, Varuna especially appears frequently as the guardian of the moral order and the chastiser of transgressors. Several selections have been included in the Vedic section of this anthology from the *Mantra* as well as the *Brahmana* portions to enable appreciation of the fact that the Veda is not only not void of ethical content but attaches sufficient importance to it.

The Vedas are also jointly referred to as *Trayi* or *Trayi Vidya,* the threefold lore; the three Vedas are the Rik, Yajus and Saman. The word *Rik* is from a root meaning "to worship" and *Yajus* from the root *"Yaj"* means much the same thing; but as the two texts came to be employed for sacrificial purposes, the two names came to be distinguished, *Rik* meaning hymns, and *Yajus,* the sacrificial formulæ. For, while the Rigveda is wholly a collection of hymns intended for recitation and is arranged in books dedicated to the respective deities they celebrate and the families of Seers who "saw" them, the Yajus, like the Saman, keeps the sacrificial and ritualistic purpose before it. The word *Saman* means music, and the Samaveda is little more than a musical arrangement of the Rigveda, the only ones out of its 1549 stanzas not going back to the Rigveda, being a meagre number of 71 or 75. In a sacrifice (*Yajna*), the *Hotr* priest recited the hymns of the Rigveda, the *Adhvaryu* priest recited the Yajus text and performed the various acts according to the formulæ therein, and the *Udgatr* priest sat and sang the Saman chants; sometimes, as at the Asvamedha sacrifice, the music was accompanied on the lute (*Vina*). In the Samaveda therefore we have the most ancient form of Indian music, and later musical tradition looks to the Samaveda as the source of the art.[1] The singing

[1] The original Saman chant had only three notes, found even now in the Jaiminiya school as preserved in some families of South India,

of the Saman has greater spiritual effect than secular music; the Upanishads developed a mysticism of Saman-music and one of their chief meditative exercises elaborated in the Chandogya Upanishad of the Samaveda relates to Saman singing;[1] the Samavidhana, one of the Brahmanas of this Veda, expatiates upon the spiritual and expiatory efficacy of different Saman chants; this belief is very important in so far as all later musical practice is based on the same idea that the art is an aid to concentration and salvation.[2] It is remarkable that not only in the employment of the three notes but in several other respects, the Hebrew chants correspond very closely to Saman-singing.[3]

Side by side with the hymns which were addressed to divinities and which were collected into the Rigveda, there were others of manifold non-sacrificial applications, used in society and at home, which were of twofold character, wholesome (*Bhaishajyani*), intended to expiate sins or appease evil forces (*Santi*) and augment one's happiness and welfare (*Pushti*), and harmful (*Ghora* and *Angirasa*) for use against enemies (*Abhicara*). A few hymns of such social character are already seen towards the end of the Rigveda, but soon they formed into a whole separate collection called the Atharvan which came to be recognised as the fourth Veda. Some of the charms here really go back to the Indo-European times and have their parallels in German and

particularly in Malabar; later the Saman verses came to be rendered in all the seven notes of the Indian scale as in the Kauthuma school preserved in South India and elsewhere, though even here, the seventh note is rare.

[1] See below, p. 79.

[2] See below, Section IV. Dharma Sastra, selections from Yajnavalkya Smriti, p. 140.

[3] See my article, "The Music of the Hebrews—Resemblances to Vedic Chants" in the *Journal of the Music Academy*, Madras, XXV, pp. 109-111.

Russian. Thus the Atharvan hymns comprise texts which are of deeper social interest; among those intended for promoting welfare (*Paushtika*), there are hymns to be used for the success of agriculture and trade and for promoting love and understanding among the various members of a family and members of society and those met in special assemblies, and between the teachers and the taught. There are some philosophical hymns also. The Atharvaveda was not used in sacrifices, but later, one of the sacrificial priests, the Brahman, who was the chief supervisor of the performance, whose duty it was to note lapses and remedy them by special expiatory rites and recitals, was linked to the Atharvaveda. More clearly, literature like the Artha Sastra and the poetical works of Kalidasa show that the Atharvangiras was a magical and mystical lore in which the priests at courts and elsewhere had to be proficient to avert calamities and to procure manifold benefits; thus the Atharvan was pre-eminently the popular Veda. Its use by kings is shown by one of its appellations, *Kshatra* (Royal), and its vogue among the common people by Apastamba's statement in his Dharma Sutras that all arts and lores current among the masses are to be included under Atharvaveda.

With respect to philosophical development too, the first part of the Veda, referred to as Samhita, is not without significance. Some of the Upanishads themselves form part of the Samhita. Even in the Rigveda, the earliest, the Samhita portion discloses clearly the growth of a monotheistic and philosophical trend in the rise of the concept of dual deities, of a composite concept of all deities in one, called *Visve Devah,* of abstract deities, and of a divinity glorified by its divine attributes rather than by any particular name. Apart from the cosmogonic hymn[1] in which creation is described and the hymn of

[1] See below, p. 17.

the Supreme Being (*Purusha Sukta*),[1] there are certain other hymns also which tradition definitely recognises as philosophical, *e.g.*, the Asyavamiya in the very first book where, in as clear accents as the Upanishad, the hymn declares: "*Truth is one, the wise call it by different names.*"[2] In another respect too, the hymnal output of the Vedic seers is significant; for in them we have the earliest outpourings of devotion. It is usually held that devotion or *Bhakti* was one of the later phases of Indian thought and that hymnal literature grew in extent or devotional quality in the later ages. The Rigvedic hymns constitute not only the profoundest expressions of the feeling of devotion to a personal deity, but the wealth of devotional mood and attitude here, as well as their literary expression, far outshines anything in the best examples of later devotional poetry. Not only did the Vedic poets approach their deities as friends, as sons and as servants, *i.e.*, in *sakhya, vatsalya,* and *dasya* as the later devotional schools would say, but they gave expression also to what has been considered as a later development, the *Madhura-bhava,* the approach in which God is the lover and the devotee, the beloved; one Rishi has the daring fancy that God should be so considerate to him as an elderly man to the young wife he has married.[3]

With the growth of the later schools of philosophy based on the Upanishads and the development of popular

[1] See below, pp. 10-11. This hymn describing the creation of the universe, animate and inanimate, out of the Supreme Cosmic Being, is usually held to belong to a later stratum of the Rigveda, but it should be remembered that the ideas in this hymn such as the appearance of beings or classes of them out of different parts of the Supreme Being have Indo-European roots, as the Purusha Sukta parallels in the old literature of the Indo-European races show. See, *e.g.*, "A Note on the Old Russian Variant of the Purusha Sukta" by St. Schayer, *Acta Orientalni,* VII, iii, pp. 319-323, Prague, 1935.

[2] See below, p. 4.

[3] See my paper "The Vedas and Bhakti" in the *Vedanta Kesari,* Madras, XLII, 8, pp. 330-336, December 1955.

theism, of temple worship and Tantric practices, one might legitimately think that the Vedas had gradually been relegated to the background. The great Vedic sacrifices have no doubt become things of the past save for stray and sundry exceptions. The Vedas themselves have however not lost their importance or authority; the tradition and the text of the entire Vedic literature could not have survived to this day if the Vedas had not retained their authority and usefulness. In the various domestic and social rites and ceremonies and for expiation of sin, personal purification and acquisition of special benefit or merit, different hymns and sections of the Veda are resorted to according to the significance attached to them in the ritual books and in works like Saunaka's *Rigvidhana* and the Smritis of Manu, Yajnavalkya and other sages. The mere recital of the Veda (*parayana*) became an act of merit and certain hymns and collections of them gained a special significance and vogue, either as pure prayer or as part of rites at home or worship in the temples. A new type of *Yajna* or adoration also developed in which, along with the repeated recital of these hymns and collections, oblations (*homa*) were made in fire. Four outstanding examples of this class, all of which are translated below,[1] are the Purusha Sukta on the Supreme all-pervading Lord Vishnu, the Sri Sukta on the Goddess of Plenty and Beauty, the Satarudriya hymns on Siva, and the portion relating to the Sun in the beginning of the Taittiriya Aranyaka, popularly known as the Surya-namaskara.

What has come down to us of Vedic literature is only a part of a still larger bulk which once existed; in different families, separate recensions or schools were maintained; these are set forth in a later Vedic text on the schools called the *Charanavyuha*. The Rigveda was

[1] See below, pp. 10-14; 18-19; 20-24; 35-38.

current in five schools but the only surviving recension is the Sakala;[1] the Rigveda consists of about 10,600 stanzas;[2] there are also at the end of these the supplementary hymns called Khilas, among which is included the Sri Sukta.

BRAHMANAS

The name Mantra is sometimes restricted to the first of the three parts of the Veda, the two other parts being called Brahmana and Upanishad. The word *"brahman"* is from a root meaning "to grow or become great"; it meant originally a *mantra* or prayer which was uttered with a divine afflatus and helped one to attain to a higher spiritual level; hence a Brahmana as a person (masculine) is one who cherished the *brahman* and as a text (neuter), Brahmana meant "relating to the brahman or mantra," *i.e.*, an explanation of the meaning, importance and use of the different prayers, hymns and formulæ. The method of the Brahmana[3] text is to mention an injunction (*vidhi*) and recommend it with praise (*stuti*) but includes also condemnation (*ninda*) of the opposite. This method of treatment of the hymns employs a variety of resources which makes the Brahmana the basis of the future development of some of the scientific disciplines, mythology[4] and epic poetry. In the Brahmanas we find the earliest extant Indo-European prose literature. Its language, being in prose, preserves features of Vedic gram-

[1] The names of the schools to which particular Vedic texts belong are indicated at the head of the respective selections in the Vedic section of the anthology.

[2] Nearly one-eighth of the Rigvedic lines represent repetition.

[3] The titles of the Brahmanas of each Veda included in this anthology are given at the head of the selections.

[4] It is in one of the most important of these Brahmanas entitled the Satapatha, that we first hear of the flood legend of which there are versions in the Iranian scriptures, in the Old Testament, in Babylonia and in China.

mar which had become modified in the Samhitas owing to metrical exigencies. The variety, interest and importance of the Brahmanas thus become clear; to ignore them is merely to deprive oneself of full and first-hand knowledge of an essential link in the development of Vedic thought; for the Brahmanas were the real harbingers of the Upanishads. The speculative urge and the spirit of inquiry which culminated in the discovery of the one ultimate Truth, the Brahman, had its beginnings in the Brahmanas; it is in the Brahmanas that one first meets with that higher and esoteric sense in which the different aspects of sacrifice and ritual were understood in the Upanishads so as to render them useful as meditative exercises (*vidyas*); in the Upanishads, one finds often that things are understood on three planes, the sacrificial or the divine (*adhiyajna* or *adhidaiva*), the natural (*adhibhuta*) and the subjective (*adhyatma*); this threefold interpretation again originated in the Brahmanas and the subjective turn (*adhyatma*) that the Brahmanas thus gave was responsible for the further investigations into the nature of the inner Self (*atman*) and the birth of philosophy which came to be called *adhyatma-vidya*. If the Upanishads regularly use the concept of *"devas"* (gods) as meaning the senses, presided over by their respective deities, it was the Brahmanas which inaugurated this esoteric interpretation; for instance, the Satapatha Brahmana understands the Rishis themselves as one's own "breath," (*Pranah*) (VI. 1. 1. 1. 1.) and the "waters," (*Apas*), the first creation, as the all-pervasive principle of speech (*Vak*) (VI. 1. 1. 1. 9, 10). How this spiritual orientation forms the bridge of transition can be seen in the opening sections of the Upanishads, the most noteworthy examples being the elaborate mysticism of Samanchanting and the Asvamedha sacrifice figuring as preludes to the philosophical teachings in the two biggest Upanishads, the Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka.

UPANISHADS

The more esoteric of the speculations of the Brahmanas were cultivated in the forests; and hence the later portion of the Brahmana where they occur is called Aranyaka; the final part of the Aranyaka is more definitely philosophical and forms the third main section of the Veda called the Upanishad and the Vedanta. The name *Vedanta* indicates not only its textual position at the end of the Vedas, but its supreme importance as the acme and crown of the Vedic knowledge (*Veda-anta*, end of the Veda). *Upa-nishad* means "sitting near" and receiving intimate teaching; *Upa-sadana*, the same word without the particle "*ni*" means approaching the *guru* (teacher) for enlightenment, and one of the accepted senses in which the word "*Upanishad*" is used is "secret." With reference to the purpose to which the teachings of the Upanishads are directed, Sankara explains, in the course of the preliminary remarks to his commentary on the Katha Upanishad, that *Upanishad* is so called because it puts an end to the transmigratory travail to which the soul has been subjected. Explaining the word *Upanishad* in Brihadaranyaka, II. 4. 10, Sankara applies it to the meditative exercises, *Upasanas* or *Vidyas*. These *Upasanas* or meditations form the intermediate stage between the ritual of the earlier portion, *Karma-kanda*, and the knowledge of the Upanishad, *Jnana-kanda*. The Chandogya Upanishad (III. v. 1), mentions over and above the three Vedas and the Atharvangiras together with the Itihasa-Purana, the body of secret instructions, "*Guhya adesa*," which Sankara identifies with the Upanishads; these *Vidyas* were fully utilized in the Upanishads. The Upanishad thus comprises a part called *Upadesa* where the cultivation of such meditations is recommended, and another part, metaphysical exposition or discussion (*Vichara*). The *Vidyas* are dealt with in Chapter III, Book iii, of the Vedanta Sutras and later

commentators recognise about thirty-two of these; a good number of these occur in the Chandogya, the well-known ones called Udgitha, the Akshi, the Madhu, the Sandilya and the Dahara; in the Taittiriya are found the Purusha and the Ananda; and in the Brihadaranyaka, the Panchagni, the Akshara, etc.

In the renderings in this volume are given substantial portions of the eleven major and older Upanishads. The Upanishads continued to multiply and at one stage they were enumerated as one hundred and eight in number, but this put no stop to the growth of later texts calling themselves Upanishads; some of them amplify the further details of the path of renunciation, knowledge and *Yoga*, contemplation of *Pranava* and the practices of asceticism; the main features of the rest are that while the more important among them are theistic and glorify one or the other of the personal aspects of divinity like Nrisimha, Rama, and other incarnations of Vishnu. Surya or Devi, others concern themselves with: (i) popular divinities (*e.g.*, Ganesa) and Divine Teachers (*e.g.*, Dattatreya) and (ii) accessories of worship and religious and spiritual practice, *e.g.*, the rosary (*Akshamala* and *Rudraksha*) and the holy ash (*Bhasma*).

VEDANGAS AND UPAVEDAS

The Vedas have six ancillary disciplines or *angas* (limbs), the *Siksha* or phonetics, *Vyakarana* or grammar, *Nirukta* or etymology, including a lexicon of Vedic words, *Chandas* or prosody, *Jyotisha* or astronomy and geometry, and *Kalpa* or ritual codes. The use of phonetics, metrics and grammar for the correct preservation of the Vedic text is obvious; etymology is for understanding the meaning and setting of hymns, characteristic modes of expression and certain difficult words; Yaska's *Nirukta* on this subject has been preserved; astronomy and geometry are to help in the fixing of proper times

for performing the sacrifices and the construction of sacrificial altars; ritual codes are handbooks for the performance of sacrifices. Four other disciplines are classed together as subsidiary Vedas (*Upaveda*), and attached to each of the four Vedas. The first is the Ayurveda or the science of medicine, the promulgator of which, Dhanvantari, is deemed an incarnation of Vishnu. The second Upaveda is Dhanurveda, archery or military science; the Indian ideals of warfare insist on *sama* or peaceful negotiation as the primary means of settlement of differences, and war as a last resort; and war itself has its code of fighting, *dharma-yuddha*. The third Upaveda is Gandharva or music; attention has been drawn above to the spiritual efficacy of this art. The fourth is given as Artha Sastra, polity. Artha or material advantage is subject to *Dharma*, the principle of righteousness, and when there is a conflict between policies and morality, the latter should prevail according to one of the leading authorities, the Smriti of Yajnavalkya.[1]

When dealing with these works we are already in the beginnings of what is called the Sutra Period, when brief prose aphorisms or catchwords were employed to set down the essentials of a subject, a form of literature peculiar to Sanskrit.[2] The *Sutra* may mean a thread or suggestive words and phrases (from *suchana*). This form of literature was evolved for facilitating memorising and oral transmission of knowledge. Many ancillary Vedic texts arose in this style, *e.g.*, the grammatical *Pratisakhyas* which formed the precursors of the *Ashtadhyayi*, the great Sanskrit grammar of Panini; the subjects of the *Pratisakhyas* varied with the Veda to which they had

[1] The drastic provisions in the Artha Sastra of Kautilya-Chanakya, usually referred to as the Indian Machiavelli, are not always or universally applicable; Kalidasa and Bana have condemned them.

[2] See for illustrations of this the renderings of the Yoga Sutras below, pp. 141-149.

reference. We have the Nidana Sutra of the Samaveda dealing with both the metre and chanting of the Samaveda, and other Sutras dealing with Saman-singing. The Sulba Sutras are for the construction of altars and contain the beginnings of geometry. Several metrical concordances also arose, enumerating the metres, the gods, and the seer-authors of the hymns, for the proper employment of a hymn should include a recital of its metre, deity and "seer"; Saunaka, whose *Rigvidhana* has already been referred to, is also the author of *Brihaddevata* which is an important text in this branch; it not only enumerates the gods but narrates the mythology associated with each. The Kalpa or ritual branch is by far the largest and most complicated; the Sutras in this branch are preserved in different schools and comprise two departments, *Srauta* and *Grihya*, Vedic ritual and domestic rites.

DHARMA SASTRA

The third department of the last-mentioned Sutras current in the different schools deals with *Dharma*. *Dharma* comprises all the duties pertaining to an individual in the context of his caste and station in life, *Varna* and *Asrama*, and customary laws. The ultimate source of all these duties is recognised as the Veda; the further criteria of *Dharma* are the *Smriti* texts and the conduct of those who know the Veda and act according to its injunctions. The word *Smriti* means what is remembered and is generally applied to all authoritative texts other than the Vedas and includes even the science of grammar, the epics and the Puranas; all these are deemed to be based on tradition which ultimately goes back to the Veda. In a memorable passage,[1] the poet Kalidasa points out how the *Smriti* has to follow the meaning and intention of the Veda. The third source is *Sadachara*, the conduct of those who know the Veda and have been

[1] Raghuvamsa, II. 2.

observing their duties properly and are referred to as *sishta* (disciplined).

The scope of the concept of *Dharma* is universal and comprehends even the personal habits of hygiene, details of courteous behaviour and moral endowments, duties of kings and the administration of justice, and the seeking of the *summum bonum,* spiritual realisation. Under compulsory duties (*dharmas*) are included all the sacraments (*samskaras*) dealt with among the domestic rites in the Grihya Sutras noted above. The ideology of the Dharma-texts and the scheme of sacraments is that man has to undergo purification and refinement to make him fit for the higher life; it is like a rough gem from the mine getting polished and cut, as the poet Kalidasa says;[1] once submitted to these *samskaras,* literally processes of purification and refinement, he is subject to the rules and regulations of a higher scheme of things; he is a new man, a twice-born (*dvija*), born again into a higher life.

The *Dharma* literature is fourfold: the *Sutras,* the *Smritis* or *Sastras,* the commentaries, and the *Nibandhas* or digests and manuals. The oldest of the Dharma Sutras is the text of Gautama of the Samavedins; then come those of Bodhayana and Apastamba of the Black Yajurveda, and the Vishnu and Vaikhanasa Dharma Sutras of the same Veda.

The Smriti or Dharma Sastra texts associated with different sages form a considerable branch by themselves; their total number has been, at different times, 18, 19, 24, and 36. The Smritis of Manu and Yajnavalkya are the most important among these. This anthology includes selections from Apastamba, Gautama, Manu and Yajnavalkya.

Manu occupies a dominant place in Indian thought; he is one of the progenitors of the race, a patriarch em-

[1] Raghuvamsa, III. 18.

bodying in himself the roles of both ruler and spiritual teacher. "What Manu says is medicine," according to the Veda; if Panini fixed Sanskrit grammar, Manu fixed Indian conduct for all times. Manu's influence is not confined to the borders of India but comprehends the whole of South-East Asia, where the Manu Smriti was adopted as the model of the local institutes of conduct and law. The Yajnavalkya Smriti, associated with the name of one of the foremost Vedic sages and philosophers, is later than Manu's work; it represents an advance in thought over Manu, and is more precise and detailed in the treatment of legal procedure.

The scope of most of the other Smritis is restricted, as they deal with only select sections coming under *Dharma*. The fourth section is that of Nibandhas or digests and manuals in which later authors classified the subjects under different heads and synthesised the views of several of the original Smritis. The authors of these digests, many of whom held high positions in court and were in charge of religious administration, wrote also special treatises or handbooks on select sections.

ITIHASAS AND PURANAS

Itihasas and Puranas constitute the effective end of Hinduism so far as the lay public and the masses are concerned. In more senses than one they form the scripture of popular Hinduism.

The words *Itihasa* and *Purana,* jointly or severally, occur in later Vedic literature. Those parts of the Veda itself where there are narratives of older incidents and stories of earlier personalities are Itihasa and those which give accounts of how the world was of yore, *i.e.,* the hymns of cosmogony and creation are Purana. There occur in the Vedas verses called *Gathas Narasamsis,* eulogising heroes and patrons who conducted sacrifices and made gifts. Along with these, we come across also the

name *Akhyana* meaning "narrative" and those versed in them (*Akhyana-vids*). From the Aitareya and Satapatha Brahmanas we know that during sacrifices like the Rajasuya and the Asvamedha, rhapsodists were engaged to recite edifying stories like that of Sunassepha or Suparna, the latter on the legends of the origin of snakes and birds. When these stories of earlier kings, heroes, sages and orders of divine and semi-divine beings accumulated, they came to constitute a separate class of literature enjoying a status nearly equal to that of the Veda itself.

There was in ancient India a class of bards who went about or were engaged to recite these stories of old;[1] each king had his own *Suta*; and as can be seen from the character Sumantra in the Ramayana, he was a versatile, multi-purpose adjunct of the court, a counsellor, an intimate friend, a charioteer and the minstrel steeped in the annals of the royal house. The long public sacrifices (*satras*) were the principal occasions of ancient Indian life when these *Sutas* edified the gathering with their narrations. All the Puranas that we now have are said to have been redacted by the Sage Vyasa, and handed down to us through his *Suta*-disciple Romaharshana, the story-teller who could raise one's hair by his graphic accounts, and by his son Ugrasravas. They were recited at the continued sacrificial sessions of the sages gathered in the sacred forest of Naimisa on the banks of the river Gomati, a tributary of the Ganga.

The Purana is distinguished by five characteristics (*pancha lakshanas*): Primary Creation (*sarga*) which forms its original significance, Dissolution by the periodical deluges and the creation again (*pratisarga*), the Genealogies of the Gods and progenitors and the sages (*vamsa*), the Epochs marked by dissolutions and secondary creations presided over by their respective sages and

[1] Such minstrels were known among the Greeks, the Celts, the Vikings and the Kurds.

progenitors (*manvantaras*), and the History of the Dynasties of kings who ruled during these periods (*vamsanucharita*).[1] These topics afforded a medium by which the bards could convey Vedic lore to the people in a popular form. The Puranas were intended to reinforce and elaborate (*upa-brimh*) the Vedic teachings; an exegetical dictum has it that the Veda is to be supplemented by the Itihasa-Purana. The vogue and influence of this medium of popular, moral, religious and philosophical instruction is borne out by the significant evidence of Buddhism and Jainism, both of which produced a considerable literature in imitation of Itihasa-Purana. From literature and epigraphy, a continuous view of the vogue of the Itihasa-Purana as a source of popular enlightenment is available.[2]

The old race of *Sutas* was succeeded by expositors in the historic periods for whom there were endowments in temples, and today their successors, the *Bhats*, the *Charans*, the *Kathaks*, the *Bhagavatas* and the *Pauranikas*, are carrying on the work of this most potent vehicle of popular religious education. Either as a musical discourse (*Hari-Katha*) or as an exposition by a puranic reciter, in the temple, in one's house or in a public place, the stories of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata are a source of solace, enjoyment and edification to all classes. Such expositions are not less popular than the political conferences and other miscellaneous *melas* of modern life, and there is, even to this day, no

[1] These subjects are fragmentarily represented in the list of kings, the deluge, the creation and other legends in the records of the peoples of Asia Minor. The mass of stories of kings and different tribes and peoples and beings referred to as semi-divine in the Sanskrit *Itihasas* and *Puranas* contain historical material which may legitimately be suspected to carry memories of the peoples of Iran, Asia Minor and other regions with whom the Indian Aryans were in contact.

[2] See my paper "Adult Education in Ancient India" in the *Memoirs of the Madras Library Association*, 1944, pp. 57-65, and "Methods of Popular Religious Instruction in South India" in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, "The Religions," pp. 503-514.

Indian city, town or village where one will not see big concourses of people absorbed in listening to the exposition in their own languages of these Itihasas and Puranas. It is to the Itihasa-Purana and its gifted exponents that Indian men and women owe their ingrained ideals of character and conduct,—of chastity like that of Savitri and Sita, of truthfulness like that of Harischandra, of generosity like that of Karna, of righteousness like that of Rama and Yudhishthira, of ideal brotherhood like that of Rama and his brothers; and it is to the same inspiration that India as a nation owes its innate outlook of peace (*santi*) and universal benevolence (*ahimsa*) and the desire for the reign of a moral order such as there was when Rama was King.

The epics and the Puranas were carried by the Hindus wherever they went; they formed the pilots of their civilisation and culture; the Brahmanda Purana had very early reached Java and Bali; the finest series of representations in stone of Valmiki's epic is to be found in Prambanan; in the Javanese theatre, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are still the favourite themes of dance and drama, although the country has been converted to Islam; and in Cambodia, an inscription of *c.* 600 A.D. informs us that one Somasarman presented to the temple for recital and exposition the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Purana; and in Trakian in Champa, King Prakasadharman (*c.* 653-679 A.D.) raised the only known temple to the immortal author of the Ramayana.

The epics and the Puranas have exercised the greatest influence on Indian art; from the earliest times, the poets drew from them their themes for poems and plays, the two epics especially being their favourite sources; a popular drama in the local languages developed which presented the exploits of Rama and Krishna or other mythological stories, and the Itihasa-Purana as an edifying medium was here reinforced by the addition of art;

the temple itself was the centre of such presentations through drama and dance, for which there were special endowments. The paintings and sculptures in the temples depicted scenes from the same source. With musical and histrionic embellishments, the themes and teachings of the Itihasas and Puranas were put across to the masses in art-forms of music and dance such as the *Hari-Katha* and the *Kirtan,* the *Kathak,* the *Natakas,* the *Kuttus* and the *Kathakali.*

The Itihasa and the Purana played as important a part in the individual as in the public sphere. The devout Hindu still preserves the habit of reading daily (*parayana*) a part of a sacred book and he would not sit down to his meal before reading the Ramayana, the Bhagavata or the Gita or some favourite hymns.

PURANAS

The literature of the Puranas is the largest single body of Sanskrit writings. Eighteen of them are recognised as major Puranas and an equal number as the Upapuranas, the minor ones. As early as the 11th century A.D., Alberuni notes in his *Indica*[1] some minor Puranas not found in the present list. Several Purana-like compilations bearing the name Samhitas also arose, some of which attached themselves to well-known Puranas. The chief Puranas alone comprise in all, according to one count, 400,000 verses.

The name Purana is sometimes given the etymology *pura api navam,* "old but new" or "ever old and ever new," which, strangely enough, emphasises one of its main features in historical times; the Purana was always more a live institution than a fixed text; it went on growing, revising and amplifying itself; one of the five essential

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[1] *An Accurate Description of All Categories of Hindu Thought. . . .* by Alberuni, the Arabic scholar who visited India during the time of Muhammad Ghazni, written about 1030 A.D.

characteristics of the Purana set forth above, *vamsanu-charita*, related to the royal dynasties; under this head, the account of kings was brought up to date in the Gupta Age and the period preceding the emergence of the next great empire of Harshavardhana of Kanauj. While the legends of creation and dissolution, the sages, gods and progenitors and the epochs were kept intact under the old headings *sarga, pratisarga, vamsa* and *manvantara*, the elaboration of these was undertaken by comprehensive accounts of the universe, cosmography and description of the different seas and continents (*Bhuvana-kosa*). The new schools of philosophical thought were absorbed and a synthetic account of *Sam-khya-Vedanta* with *Yoga* as an ancillary discipline was given in all of them; a large number of forms of worship current among different groups of people in different parts of the country, the popular cults, were taken note of here, though the orthodox philosophers of established systems and schools were yet to recognise them.

Another direction in which the Purana grew may be compendiously referred to as pilgrimage, *kshetra* and *tirtha*. The account of holy places where specific mani-festations of Divine Presence took place or sages and saints lived, did their penance and attained salvation, figures largely already in the two Itihasas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In the latter epic, long portions are devoted to a description of holy spots. The spiritual value of pilgrimages to them is emphasised and pilgrimage is praised as a more efficacious form of sacrifice (*yajna*): two of the leading figures of the great epic go on pil-grimages unable to contemplate the coming war or take either side in it; the importance of such sacred sites in-creased with the rise of temples, and then arose the class of writings called *Mahatmyas,* which glorified the sanctity,—previous spiritual associations, efficacy of visit, bathing and worship,—of particular parts of the country

and the shrines, rivers and lakes there.

Most of the Puranas embody material bearing on this subject of *kshetra* (Holy Spot) and *tirtha* (Holy Waters), and the Skanda Purana may be singled out in this connection. Special expository treatises also arose on the significance of some of the more important pilgrim centres like Banaras (Varanasi or Kasi), Prayaga (Allahabad) and Gaya, where baths and propitiation of one's ancestors (*sraddha*) are held to be specifically meritorious. The texts relating to the glorification of some famous local temples are no mean achievements as literary productions. Some of the great Chola temples were envisaged by their authors, the teachers and the royal builders together, as concrete embodiments of spiritual truths; two examples will suffice to illustrate the inner significance of what might be thought of as a negligible part of Hindu literature: the stories relating to Chidambaram, the shrine of Nataraja, and Tiruvarur, the shrine of Tyagaraja, both in South India. The former represents the doctrine of a dry, soulless routine of sacrificial ritual yielding to the overpowering influence of divine personality and the philosophy of the Lord engaged in his eternal dance of creation, maintenance, destruction, bondage and deliverance, on the cosmic stage; the macrocosmic dance on the vast stage of the firmament has its counterpart in the microcosm, in the heart of the individual, the smaller ether, the miniature stage, the *dabhra*, *dahra* or *dahara akasa* of the Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Upanishads; thus Chidambaram is *Dahara vidya* in symbolic presentation. No less inspiring is the symbology of Tiruvarur and God Tyagaraja which represents a spiritual *vidya* called *Ajapa* or *Hamsa-mantra,* in which the soul (*atman*) of the individual is seen in the eternal rhythm of life, swaying and dancing in the very process of breathing in and out, the concomitant subtle sound of "*(A)ham sa*" signifying the Upanishadic affirmation, "I am That."

Pilgrimages form one of the strongest bonds of national unity, and as such the branch of literature that fostered this institution has special significance to a student of Indian history and life.

Like pilgrimages and vows and austerities, gifts (*dana*) are a means both of expiating sin and acquiring merit and mental peace; most of the Puranas devote extensive attention to this subject of *dana-dharma*.

The growth of the temples and the ramification of image-worship contributed a good deal of new material to the Puranas; temple architecture, iconography and consecration of images and methods of worship became legitimate parts of the Puranas; the Agni Purana may be cited as a typical example and the Vishnu-dharmottara is especially rich in the details of Vishnu-worship and the arts of iconography and painting.

Another major subject which the Purana attracted to itself is *Dharma*. The account of the sages and the royal personages of old who upheld the institutes ordained by God, contained within itself the necessary nucleus for further growth in this direction; the descriptions of the four castes and the four stations of life, *varna* and *asrama*, and the duties pertaining to them brought in their train further treatment of *Dharma*. For expiation of sin and for acquiring merit, vows and austerities (*vratas*) were undertaken; propitiatory vows either for the appeasement of particular deities or intense practice of devotion to deities, special feasts, fasts and minor religious observances all round the year were also prescribed in the Puranas, together with short stories to enforce the efficacy and fruitfulness of their observance.

As the King was the guardian and administrator of all these sacred and civil laws, the duties of the King (*Raja-dharma*) were also taken into the scope of the Purana. In the train of the King's duties came polity or

Raja-niti, conduct of military campaigns (*Yuddha-yatra*), and other branches of knowledge necessary for the conduct of kingly life. As the King was a patron of literary and artistic activities and the palace second only to the temple as their headquarters, the Purana expanded so as to take in all arts and sciences; in fact, the Purana became a popular thesaurus of knowledge; achievements and information in different scholarly pursuits were given in brief form so that the perusal or hearing of Puranas might give to adults and youth otherwise preoccupied a fairly complete liberal education.[1]

That the Puranas had established themselves as an all-round authority by the seventh and eighth centuries can be realized by citations from them on matters of conduct, religion and philosophy by eminent authorities on *Dharma, Mimamsa* and *Vedanta.*

Among all these Puranic works, three deserve special notice. The Vishnu is an old Purana which is quoted as an authority by Sankara himself; it preserves a high literary quality, unity and the impression of unitary authorship; it gives an account of Vishnu's incarnations and forms the basis of the Bhagavata Purana, not only in this respect, but also in the blending of *Advaita* and *Bhakti, i.e.,* knowledge and devotion. The Bhagavata however eclipsed it by presenting the same material in a new form; it took up the old stories but reshaped them; its statement of *Advaita,* often by embodying the Upanishadic passages themselves, is more emphatic, and its devotion to Krishna more ardent and moving. It is a work of art which sets aside conventional canons of poetic composition and rules of grammar; with the new turns it gave to the old ideas and the incisive style in which it expressed them, with its intellectualism synthesised with emotional fervour, the Bhagavata gained a unique

[1] See my paper "Adult Education in Ancient India," already referred to.

supremacy and stirred new religious upsurges in the country, notably in Maharashtra and Bengal. Comparable only to the Ramayana in popularity, it is read privately every day and expounded again and again in public. According to the Bhagavata, every other feature of the Purana is subordinate to the elucidating of the Lord's greatness. Another noteworthy contribution of the Bhagavata relates to the problem of evil; the Lord incarnates again and again to suppress evil; the question of the origin of evil is raised and whether the Lord may not be considered to be suffering from callousness or partiality in allowing the growth of evil or putting down those responsible for it. The answer is given that it is man who falls by his own acts; the demon was previously a divine being; his violent opposition to God hastens his meeting Him and seeking, by death at His hands, his purification from evil and his eventual regaining of divine status.

What the Bhagavata, composed in South India soon after the age of the great Tamil Vaishnava Saints, did for the propagation of the philosophy of the Upanishads, synthesised with devotion to Vishnu and Krishna, another important production of South India, belonging to the epoch of the early Cholas, accomplished on the background of Saivism. The work is known as the Suta Samhita and is associated with the Skanda Purana; it describes at length the worship of Siva, the path of knowledge and *Yoga* and some of the spiritual exercises like the *Dahara vidya* and the *Ajapa vidya* referred to already, and, in the latter part, supplies a *résumé* of all the major Upanishads. The Suta Samhita bears the impress of the Saiva devotion of the Nayanars, to whose Tamil hymns it makes a reference in I. 7. 22; and it expounds *Advaita* in a more pronounced manner than the Bhagavata.

ITIHASAS—EPICS

The *'Iti-ha-asa'* ('So-was-it'), in its later developments, concentrated on *vamsanucharita,* one of the five characteristics of the Purana, the accounts of royal dynasties; there again it restricted itself to a single race and within that dealt with the story of a single central personality and a single reign. The Itihasa was characterised by greater unity and a more literary style but, as a popular religious educator, it kept itself close to the Purana from which it took as many of its subjects as possible. Apart from their higher teachings, the Itihasas, particularly the Mahabharata, are a storehouse of moral maxims which make them a liberal education for the masses in all departments of life.

The Itihasas comprise the Ramayana of the sage Valmiki and the Mahabharata of the sage Vyasa; these two are the most important books of popular Hinduism, whose stories and teachings are imbibed by a Hindu even as a child. To place the two Indian epics on a par with Homer or Virgil is to ignore how the Indian poems have been adored and how they have moulded the character and faith of the people.

The Ramayana

The Ramayana is also the earliest poem, the *Adi-kavya,* and its author, the *Kavi* or the poet *par excellence.* Its preliminary cantos narrate the story of how the poem was born of the pathos-filled heart of the sage-poet; according to this story, which supplied the nucleus later for Indian literary criticism, the Ramayana was the first metrical composition after the Veda; and in the method of treatment, description of situations and delineation of feelings, in the figures of speech and fancies, it is the model for all later Sanskrit poetry.

The central theme of the Itihasa is the triumph of righteousness over evil, the suppression of demoniac

forces, of *adharma,* by God who incarnates and resurrects the values of Truth and Goodness. As the hero, Rama, the Lord here upholds the ideals of virtue and righteousness and overthrows Ravana, the King of the Rakshasas, who was oppressing mankind with his immense power and inordinate lust. Here are also illustrated the ideals of brotherhood and friendship, morality and chastity, on the part of man and woman; here is also presented in the ideal rule that prevailed under Rama (*Rama-rajya*), the concept of a state in which none harmed another (*ahimsa*) and which was based on the principle that the King himself was only a regent of *Dharma* which was enthroned as the sovereign ruler, an ideal which Mahatma Gandhi, in modern times, continuously held before the Indian nation. Rama declares in a significant context in the epic, "I shun that military ideal which is unrighteousness masquerading as virtuous principle, and is followed by low and cruel persons indulging in evil actions."

Valmiki gave India Rama; his epic gave the country one of its most popular devotional movements; the very name Rama is a *mantra* and a solace. Not only was the Rama story retold in many of the Puranas and even in the other epic, the *Mahabharata,* but when Rama had come to be worshipped as God Himself and Sita as a Goddess, and the cult of Rama expanded, Upanishads of Rama came into being, and many subsidiary Ramayanas, presenting versions of the story with a more pronounced religious and spiritual orientation, arose in Sanskrit. Of these last, the most important is the Adhyatma Ramayana which is a philosophical version of the epic; it influenced Tulasidas in his Hindi Ramayana (the Ramacharitamanas) and was adapted in Malayalam by Tunchattu Ezhuttacchan. Compilations in Puranic style also arose, devoted exclusively to Rama worship. Every language of India has its own Ramayana. Of all these, those of

Kamban in Tamil and Tulasi in old Hindi or Awadhi are the most important. Kamban, who appeared in the wake of the powerful Vaishnava movement, gave his poetic art an emphatic devotional setting in which Rama stood for the Supreme God, and his poem too, like Valmiki's original, is devoutly read and expounded. The sway of Tulasi over the Hindi-speaking world is something unequalled and Sir G. Grierson calls Tulasi one of the half-dozen great writers of Asia. More than any other work the Ramayana captured the imagination of the peoples of the neighbouring islands and countries of South-East Asia. In Valmiki's original itself, there is a blessing which God Brahma pronounces on the author that the story of the Ramayana and the fame of Valmiki would live as long as mountains should stand and rivers flow on the face of the earth. True to this prophecy, the Ramayana and its influence have not only endured but have overflowed the borders of India.

The Mahabharata

The *Mahabharata* is the work of a mind of wider range and more intellectual approach than that of Valmiki; the imagination of its author, Vyasa, is more comprehensive and brilliant; if Valmiki's style excels in poetic grace, Vyasa's is more direct and forceful. In the wealth and variety of motifs, the delineation of character and psychology, and the submitting of the greatest characters and principles to trials of Fate, Vyasa is seen as one of daring genius. If Valmiki moves us to compassion with the pathetic picture of Sita (*Karuna*), Vyasa impresses upon us, with the tragedy of the Pyrrhic victory at Kurukshetra, the vanity of human wishes (*Vairagya*) and the need to cherish virtue as the sole means of attaining the peace of the Soul (*Santi*).

In another important respect, the Mahabharata differs from the Ramayana; very early, it began to grow

like the Puranas; not only did a large number of subsidiary stories became attracted to it, not only were discourses on every imaginable subject coming under the general heading of *Dharma* incorporated at every stěp, but the very verses were inflated by a peculiar method so that it is now a highly difficult task to reduce the great epic to its original form. The traditional count of the verses of the *Mahabharata* is 100,000 and in a Gupta inscription of the fifth century, it is already mentioned as a work of that extent. The epic begins calling itself a poem and later describes itself as a *Sastra*, *i.e.*, a treatise on the principles, not of one object of human pursuit alone, but of all the four,—meritorious duty, material welfare, emotional enjoyment and spiritual salvation—, combined into one. Like the Ramayana, it makes a well-known claim for itself: "What is here may be found elsewhere also; what is not here cannot be found anywhere."

It is in this epic that we have all those stories illustrating the ideals of Indian womanhood, like those of Savitri-Satyavan and Damayanti-Nala. The great characters of the epic have stood out like beacon-lights before the Indian people,—the hero Yudhishthira, the embodiment of righteousness (*Dharma-putra*) and one without an enemy (*Ajata-satru*), the uncle Vidura whose very name meant wisdom and the omniscient grandfather Bhishma, the formidable celibate to whom the sacrifice of his own youth was of lesser moment than the gratification of his father. There is a saying that three portions of the Mahabharata form its essence, the Bhagavad Gita, or the Lord's discourse to Arjuna on the battlefield, the sententious observations of Vidura and the teachings of Bhishma. The Bhagavad Gita is indeed its most precious part, but its spirit and ideas permeate the whole epic.[1] The discourses of Bhishma on his death-bed cover the

[1] See my paper on "The Greater Gita," in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, XII, pp. 86-107.

widest possible range and occupy nearly two whole books. Three other important sections of the epic are the teachings of Sanatsujata to Dhritarashtra, a passage from which is echoed by the Greek ambassador Heliodorus on his column at Besnagar, the Hymn of the Thousand Names of Lord Vishnu forming part of Bhishma's teachings, included in the present anthology, and the section called Narayaniya on the worship of Narayana or Vishnu in the Santiparvan. Not less remarkable are the briefer episodes more intimately connected with the story where sublime passages occur, such as Yudhishthira's answers to the questions of the Yaksha (*Yaksha-prasna*) in the Vana-parvan.

Bewildering as all this variety of contents is, the epic has a basic unity; at the very beginning it says that the Brahman, the Supreme Being, Vasudeva-Krishna,[1] is the root of the whole tree of Dharma called Yudhishthira; He directs the whole story and not merely the chariot in the war; it is His glory and the glory of *Dharma* for which He stands that the epic proclaims. Just as the whole Veda has its essence in the short *Gayatri*, so also the Mahabharata itself has at the end the *Bharata-Savitri*, *i.e.*, the *Gayatri* of the great epic; this quintessential pronouncement exclaims:

> "With uplifted hands I shout; alas! none listens! From observance of righteousness (*Dharma*), other ends of human pursuit like wealth and pleasure come; then why is this righteousness not followed? Not for any desire, not out of any fear, not out of avarice, not even for the sake of one's life should one forsake *Dharma*."

This *Dharma* is Vyasa's message to the world.

It is not possible to take leave of the Mahabharata without some reference to its author, the sage Vyasa, and what he means to a student of Sanskrit literature and Indian thought. Called Krishna because he was dark and

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[1] The full story of Krishna himself and his race forms the subject of a supplement to the Mahabharata called the Harivamsa.

Dvaipayana because he was born on an island, he was, like Valmiki, a contemporary of the characters dealt with in his epic and an elder closely related to their family. There is perhaps no other single name with which so much of the Sanskrit heritage is associated as Vyasa. As Veda-Vyasa, he put in order the mass of Vedic literature and conserved its esoteric wisdom in the form of the aphorisms of Vedanta; he collected also the bewildering mass of myths and legends in the form of the Puranas. He was thus one of those outstanding personalities that appear at critical junctures in the history of a culture, salvage out of the chaos the elements of the shattered edifice of culture and hand over the tradition to posterity. Small wonder that a verse in the epic itself hails him as a manifestation of the Lord Himself, and adds, "Who else other than the Lord could have produced a work like the Mahabharata?" While the epic of Valmiki has been acclaimed as the first poem (*Adi-kavya*), that of Vyasa has been honoured as the fifth Veda.

DARSANAS

To the Sutra-literature referred to earlier belong the first systematic formulations of the schools of philosophy. The antiquity of the Sutras relating to the Upanishadic (*Vedanta*) philosophy followed by those who had abandoned the path of acts, renounced life and became mendicants seeking knowledge, is established by the reference in Panini's grammar to the Bhikshu Sutras of Parasarya (Vyasa) and Karmanda. The doctrines of Samkhya appear even in the Upanishads. The tenets of the Yoga school are also evident in Upanishads like the Katha. Mimamsa as the system related to the path of acts (*Karma*) comprising the Vedic sacrifices has a direct Vedic origin. Discussion pertaining to Vedic interpretation and the exact import of words as discussed by grammarians and engagement in philosophical disputa-

tions gave rise to the school of logic; the word *Tarka* or reasoning is met with in the Upanishads. From Buddhistic literature, we have evidence of the early development of Indian logic and atomism (physics), and in Kautilya's Artha Sastra of the fourth century B.C., the methodology of exposition of a system of thought is set forth under topical heads called *Tantra-yukti* which clearly bear out logical developments. The aphorisms themselves were only codifications of the thought already developed in their respective schools.

The schools of philosophy are six in number and they are distinguished as *astika*, the orthodox, as opposed to *nastika*, the heretical schools. *Astika* and *Nastika* are derived grammatically from the words "*Asti*" and "*Nasti*," and mean literally, believer and non-believer in the authority of the Vedas. The Veda is the record of a body of spiritual experience and Truth as revealed to the seers and handed down by an unbroken succession of teachers, and the object of the schools of thought is to set them forth in the form of cogent systems and to elucidate and strengthen them with the help of logical arguments. Ratiocination or *Tarka* is not to be divorced from the Veda or Revelation, for pure reason is but a blind alley; it is, as the grammarian-philosopher Bhartrihari says, like groping in the dark. Truth is first known by listening to its declaration in the Veda (*sravana*); it is then to be stabilised in one's mind by thinking it over with the help of reasoning (*manana*); and then, by the process of continuous meditation on it (*nididhyasana*), it is to be realised and made part of one's experience. In this process it is the second stage of *manana* that forms the provenance of reasoning. *Anvikshiki* is thus inquiry (*iksha*) following in the footsteps (*anu*) of the revelation (*Sruti*). These systems of thought are therefore not mere exercises of intellect but *Darsanas*, visions of Truth. The Indian systems are also characterised by the definite

statement of their end as the attainment of everlasting bliss. Therefore all these systems include a practical part, *sadhana,* to lead one to the intended goal. These systems later came to be called *Sastras,* meaning thereby merely that they are authoritative and systematic schools of thought.

The six systems are the two Mimamsas, Samkhya and Yoga, and Nyaya and Vaiseshika. The Vaiseshika is a system of logic and atomism; its seer-sage is Kanada; the Nyaya of the sage Gautama is a system of logic elaborating especially principles of debate; the categories into which reality is analysed in the Vaiseshika are accepted in the Nyaya also. The more important fact to realise is that Kanada practised Yoga and received his teaching from Mahesvara or Siva Himself, and followers of the Nyaya were also known as *Pasupatas* (devotees of Siva) and *Yaugas* or *Yogins.* The Nyaya is a theistic system, which regards God as the efficient cause of the universe and the author of the Veda; its conception of salvation is the annihilation of all pain, caused by the cycle of births and deaths, through which one's self passes, and this is to be attained with the help of God. In religious practice, these logicians belonged to different sects of Saivism and believed in and promoted the arts of music and dance. As confirmed theists and expert logicians, the adherents of Nyaya were the earliest to oppose Buddhism and maintain against its nihilism the reality of the world and of God.

The Samkhya of the sage Kapila accepts two principles, Spirit (*Purusha*) and Matter (*Prakriti*), and assigns the whole phenomenal evolution to the latter; the former is responsible only for setting the latter in action by its proximity, but is not essentially concerned or affected thereby. Matter consists of three *gunas,* dispositions, qualities or strands: *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* *Sattva* stands for lightness, knowledge and happiness;

Rajas for restlessness, passion, activity and misery; *Tamas* for ignorance, heaviness and stupor. All activities are only the interplay of these three *gunas* and liberation means the realisation of this truth, the isolation (*Kaivalya*) of the spirit, and the termination of the false identification of Spirit with mundane experiences. The Samkhya felt no need for God in this scheme; while it unified matter, it held to a plurality of spirits. It had its own ethical discipline and formulated its teaching as the only means of ending all miseries, holding the way of ritual (*Karma*) ordained in the Veda as being neither invariably nor completely capable of affording that relief.

All this was acceptable to the Yoga, the Sutras of which are considered as the work of sage Patanjali; only Patanjali accepted God as the Prime Teacher. Patanjali concentrated on the practical side, the discipline of body and mind necessary for the achievement of the isolation of the Spirit from matter and its mundane activity.[1] Instead, therefore, of enumerating again the fundamental principles set forth in the Samkhya, he engaged himself in analysing the psychological implications of the theory, and worked out a means to enable aspirants to detach their Spirits from the involvements of matter and material dispositions. The result is a system of psycho-physical therapy, a system of strict ethical discipline, a starving of the extrovert dissipation of the faculties for the purpose of deepening and sharpening them by introversion, to deprive the mind of the objective world so that by concentration on itself with the aid of lofty symbols, the depths of the Spirit could be plumbed.

The names Samkhya and *Yoga* require some more elucidation. Samkhya means knowledge in general, and *Yoga* is application. In the Gita, the term *Yoga* is used to signify action as contrasted with *Samkhya,* knowl-

[1] See below, the translation of the Yoga Sutras, pp. 141-149.

edge. As a term meaning an application or a process, *Yoga* became so generalised in its import that, used in conjunction with knowledge, action and devotion, *Jnana-yoga, Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga,* it signified a path.

The three *gunas* that the sage Kapila formulated were indeed a great contribution, because there is hardly a field of thought, higher or lower, in which the doctrine has not been adopted and made to yield very fruitful analyses.[1] For evaluating character, action and qualities, the three *gunas* have been used as the criteria. Yoga, on the other hand, achieved universal recognition; not only did all schools of Indian philosophy, religions and cults accept it, but even the heterodox systems of Buddhism and Jainism made full use of it. Today it has spread to all parts of the world. The penance (*Tapas*) of which one hears so much in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the epics as the means that the sages and seers adopted for their self-realisation has been defined and set forth concretely for the later ages by Patanjali in terms of his Yoga.

The two Mimamsas are directly Vedic, taking for their fields of exposition the two parts of the Veda, the ritual part (*Karma-kanda*) and the philosophical part (*Jnana-kanda*), the Upanishads. The former is accordingly called the *Purva* (former) or Karma Mimamsa, and the latter, the *Uttara* (later) or Brahma Mimamsa. Of the former, to which the name Mimamsa is more generally applied, the major contribution is the rules of textual interpretation which have been found to be of paramount use not only in the study of law, but in all exegesis. To the followers of this school, the Vedic injunctions were all in all and no independent God was necessary; even as to pure advocates of ethics and morality, the actions themselves were adequate to bear their

[1] See below, *e.g.*, pp. 415-6, the selection from the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter XVII.

fruits. Their service was the restoration of Vedic authority assailed by the Buddhists, and Kumarila, the greatest champion and expounder of the Purva Mimamsa in the 7th century, was one of the four great teachers to render this service to the Vedas.

The Uttara Mimamsa to which the name *Vedanta* applied, was, according to the older view, studied after the Purva Mimamsa; according to Sankara's system, the performance of ordained duties is only part of the preparatory discipline, (*sadhana*), inasmuch as it results in the purification of the mind (*Chitta-suddhi*), and knowledge of Brahman or the Supreme Being alone confers on one liberation. According to Sankara, therefore, the preliminary requisites for launching on Vedantic study are discrimination between things permanent and transient, the absence of any desire to enjoy things here or in the heavens, the acquisition of quietude, self-control and other virtues of this kind and an earnest desire to be released from bondage. The aphorisms of this school, called Brahma Sutras or Vedanta Sutras, are the work of Badarayana Vyasa who refers to other sages too who expounded this school. The school is also called Sariraka-Mimamsa as it is an enquiry into the nature of the embodied Soul. These Sutras, as Sankara explains, are a string of the flowers of statements culled from the Upanishads.

Sankara may be assigned to the 8th century A.D.; he was born at Kaladi in Kerala, on the Alwaye river; he renounced the world very early, toured all over India, fought his opponents, wrote his commentaries, reformed the methods of worship in many temples, sang at all the shrines, established a monastic order, gathered disciples, founded monastic centres (*mathas*) for his school at cardinal points in the country, and disappeared, having covered himself with glory in an all-too-brief life. No wonder he is revered and adored as an incarnation of

Siva Himself. His birthday celebrated year after year, strangely falling not far apart from those of the Buddha and Ramanuja, in Vaisakha (April-May), is a day of rejoicing all over India. By challenging Buddhism and suppressing heretical sects and practices within Hinduism, he not only re-established the Vedanta, but rescued all sects of Hinduism from the doom that threatened them; he gave new life to the devotional practices of all denominations and earned the title *Shan-mata-sthapana-acharya*, 'the establisher of all the six schools.' Sankara's philosophy was a supreme accommodator and reconciler (*sarva-samanvaya*); it comprehends within it all schools, assigning to each its place in an ascending scale. If a strong sense of fundamental unity and wide tolerance have become the very life and breath of the Indian attitude, it is to Sankara that the nation owes it as a priceless heritage.

Advaita, the monistic philosophy which Sankara established through his expositions of the principal Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita,—the triad of texts (*Prasthana-traya*) forming the basis of Vedanta,—is described as pre-eminently the philosophy of the Upanishads (*aupanishadam darsanam*). Its principal teaching is that Brahman is the sole ultimate reality, that the individual Self (*Atman*) is identical with the Supreme Soul (Brahman) and that the world of appearance, being only a transfiguration (*vivarta*) of or a superimposition (*adhyasa*) on the Brahman, possesses only relative reality.

Advaita is also expounded in a number of independent compilations, partaking of Puranic character or ascribed to sages; the foremost representative of this class, the voluminous Yogavasishtha, addressed as teachings to Rama by his preceptor Vasishtha and called the Greater Ramayana (*Maha Ramayana*), advocates an advanced type of *Advaita,* employing discussion as well as

allegorical stories. What distinguishes it most is the high poetic gift of the author. That this work was highly cherished by ascetics of the order is borne out not only by its available epitomes but also by the name *Mokshopaya* (Means of Deliverance) which it gained; a further striking importance of this work is that it exercised great fascination over the eclectic imagination of the enthusiastic Mughal Emperor Akbar and Prince Dara Shikoh, both of whom produced Persian translations of this work. Hindu Vedanta and Islamic Sufism have affinities, and Dara, who freely associated with Hindu mystics, found in the Upanishads the Great Secret, *Sirr-i-Akbar,* and *Tauhid* or divine identity; to his Persian version of the Upanishads, Sirr-i-Akbar, the West owes its first knowledge of the Hindu Upanishads;[1] and searching further for this unity, Dara produced his testament, in the Majma-ul-Bahrain, the Mingling of the Two Oceans of Hinduism and Islam, preserved in the Persian as well as in the Sanskrit version known as *Samudra-sangama-grantha*,[2] wherein he expounded the points of unity, observed that the difference was only in terminology and declared the truth of this unity as the most precious gem discovered and presented by him to his countrymen.

Sankara's new advocacy of Advaita and complete renunciation and his adoption of the monastic order roused immediate opposition from Bhaskara and a succession of writers who tried, in opposition to Sankara, to revive the old standpoint of *Bheda-Abheda* or Difference-*cum*-Identity regarding the self and the Supreme Being; all this was of little avail.

[1] Dara Shikoh's version was translated into French by Anquetil Duperron and the latter's *Oupnekhat* (Paris, 1801-2) exercised a profound influence on the German thinkers, Schelling, Schopenhauer and others.

[2] See my paper on this in the *Journal of Oriental Research,* Madras, Vol. XV, pp. 150-157.

Greater opposition to Sankara rose from the fully theistic Vaishnavism. Nathamuni, belonging to a domiciled North Indian family of the Chola country, who arranged the Tamil Vaishnava hymns, wrote the Nyayatattva and Yogarahasya, and his grandson Yamunacharya or Alavandar (11th century), a defence of the Agamas against Sankara, a philosophical treatise Siddhitraya and a commentary on the Gita. His grand pupil was Ramanujacharya, the systematic founder of the Visishtadvaita philosophy, the second chief interpretation of Vedanta. Ramanuja was born in 1017 A.D. at Sriperumbudur near Madras; he died about 1137. To him the supreme Brahman is not impersonal, but the God with the name and form of Narayana. He is not unqualified but endowed with infinite excellences, and the universe, comprising the sentient, the individual souls (*Chit*, *Jivas*), and insentient matter (*Achit*), constitutes the Lord's body. As the Lord, the one Supreme Truth, is thus qualified by these attributes (*Visishta*), Ramanuja's philosophy is called the *Advaita*, not of the attributeless, but of the *Visishta*; it is called Srivaishnavism, because the Mother Goddess, Sri, consort of the Lord, acts as the mediator of salvation on behalf of the devotees. Ramanuja's life was also momentous; he had to face persecution and flee from the Tamil country to Mysore. He boldly imparted enlightenment even to the lowliest and deservedly earned the title of "*Yatiraja*" (Prince of ascetics).

This non-monistic and theistic interpretation of the Vedanta had as its background the devotional Tamil hymns of the Vaishnava Saints of South India; as those hymns also are authoritative for it, the school earned the title, *Ubhaya* (twofold) *Vedanta*. The Srivaishnavas fell into two sects, the northern and the southern, Vadakalai and Tenkalai. There are eighteen doctrinal differences between the two; one of these refers to the doctrine of grace; the former holds the analogy of the monkey carry-

ing its little one clinging to its abdomen and emphasises that individual effort is necessary to win God's help; the other uses the analogy of the cat carrying her kitten in her mouth and insists that the Lord of Himself extends His grace and all that is needed for the devotee is to allow himself to be saved by the Lord. The latter makes an obvious concession to the less-qualified devotees, and in conformity with this popular feature, it makes greater use of the vernacular hymns. As an integral part of its doctrine of devotion, Srivaishnavism insists on *Saranagati* or *Prapatti* (submission to God); this school accordingly interprets the epic Ramayana as a text advocating such surrender to the Lord in the person of Vibhishana. In the Bhagavad Gita it emphasises Verse 66 in the last chapter, in which the Lord calls upon Arjuna to give up all *dharmas* and take refuge in Him alone, assuring him that He, the Lord, would save him from all evil and adores this assurance of the Lord as the crowning teaching, the *Charama* (last) *sloka*.[1] The work of Ramanuja and his followers gave new life to Vaishnavism and gave birth to a number of Vaishnavite devotional movements all over India.

The next important interpretation of Vedanta which contradicted Sankara in a most uncompromising manner is the pluralism of another theistic teacher of South India, Anandatirtha or Madhvacharya (1199-1278 A.D.), born near Udipi in South Kanara. His system, known as Dvaita, regards Vishnu as the Supreme God, and the end to be achieved by man as service to the Lord (*Dasya*). Like Madhva, Vishnusvami, the founder of the sect named after him, was a dualistic and theistic Vedantin.

Two other Vishnu-worshippers who produced their own interpretations of the Vedanta are Vallabhacharya (1479-1531) and Nimbarka (12th century?), both

[1] See below, the selections from the Bhagavad Gita, pp. 417-8.

originally Telugus, staying respectively at Banaras and Brindavan in the North. The former styled his monistic system Suddha-Advaita, and his school, carried on by his son, Vitthala, and other successors, practised the love for Krishna for Radha in an extravagant fashion; his school is known as "Pushti-marga" as it takes its stand on the Lord's grace. Nimbarka expounded the old standpoint of difference-*cum*-identity. The spread of devotion towards Vishnu in the eastern provinces of Bengal and Orissa was the work of Chaitanya or Gauranga called originally Visvambhara (1485-1513), born at Navadvipa (Nadia), the renowned seat of logic and dialectics in Bengal. He toured South India and himself wrote only two short hymns, Sikshashtaka and Jagannathashtaka, but his true greatness lay in his ecstatic religious experience evoked by Lord Krishna as consort of Radha. This sect was enriched with literary contributions from Rupagosvamin (1495-1550 A.D.); Baladeva (18th century) contributed a commentary on the Vedanta Sutras, designating the relation between God and the individual soul as an undefinable unity in difference, *achintya-bheda-abheda*. Chaitanya's early associates were Advaitins who were also followers of the path of devotion; it was only later that the school went over to the dualistic philosophy of Madhva.

All these North Indian Vaishnavite movements have the common characteristic of practising a highly emotional type of devotion to the form of Krishna as the Lord of Radha. The Bhagavata Purana is their Bible and no tribute to the Bhagavata is complete without a reference to the gifted Bopadeva who, writing under the Yadavas of Devagiri in the 13th century, produced systematic expositions of the Bhagavata Purana and its philosophy of God-love. The lyric drama Gitagovinda of Jayadeva of Orissa (end of the 12th century), a Sanskrit masterpiece in song, dance and gesture, presenting the

love of Radha and Krishna, provided an equally powerful inspiration. To seek God in a spirit of love, as a woman her lover, is a common devotional mood, found not only in India but in other religions such as Christianity; the love of the Gopis for the Lord is only symbolic of the yearning of the individual soul for its Lord; but an over-enthusiastic pursuit of this adoration of Radha-Krishna led the adherents of these Vaishnava sects to abuses from which the Vaishnavite movement centering round Rama, founded by Ramananda (*c.* 1400 A.D.) of Banaras was singularly free. The foremost work of this school of Ramananda is the Adhyatma Ramayana, and the school produced two of the most remarkable personalities of North India in the literary and devotional fields, Kabirdas and Tulasidas.

Among systems of philosophy which took Siva as the supreme God, the school known as Kashmir Saivism is an eclectic and attractive presentation; it is monistic but, unlike classic Advaita, recognised the Supreme Being as endowed with a personality; it is a synthesis of the personal-impersonal, the idealistic-realistic and the difference-unity doctrines; and on the practical side, it is an amalgam of Saiva and Sakta, Agama and Tantra. Its exponents were distinguished poets and æsthetes[1] and their imagination played a large part in moulding the bewildering profusion of faiths and beliefs current in Kashmir at the time of the rise and growth of this school. The devotional hymnal literature of this school, which is not sufficiently well known and from which selections have been included here, is particularly appealing.

The Siva-Advaita or a kind of monism or monotheism with Siva as the Supreme God also developed in South India. Srikantha produced an exposition of the

[1] They made distinguished contributions to Sanskrit literature, criticism, and the art of music and dance; the most celebrated among them is Abhinavagupta (*c.* 1000 A.D.)

Brahma Sutras to bring out this philosophy. Appayya Dikshita, a polymath of the Tamil country (16th century), enriched the work of Srikantha with his elaborate commentary called *Sivarkamanidipika* for which his patron, the Chief of Vellore, gave him a shower of gold (*Kanaka-abhisheka*).

AGAMA, TANTRA, MANTRA (SAIVA, VAISHNAVA, SAKTA)

It was pointed out above that the philosophers of the allied schools of Nyaya and Vaiseshika were worshippers of Siva. Epigraphical evidence shows the existence of Saivite sects from the first century A.D. onwards; the elder Saivas belong to four sects, Saivas, Pasupatas, Kapalikas and Kalamukhas. Vaishnavism took the form early of adoring Krishna-Vasudeva and his brother Sankarshana or Balarama together with Krishna's two sons and one grandson, Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha. This worship was especially popular among the clans to which Krishna belonged, the Yadavas, Vrishnis and Sattvatas; from the last the cult took its name, Sattvata; and from the five persons mentioned above and referred to as the five Vrishni heroes, *Pancha-viras*, and the festivals devoted to them, it took the name Pancha-ratra; soon these five were consolidated into four and the doctrine of the fourfold manifestation of the Lord (*Chatur-vyuha*) was upheld, Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha standing respectively for the Supreme Soul, the individual Soul, Mind, and Egoity. The Narayaniya section of the Santiparvan of the Mahabharata deals with this school; its followers claim Vedic antiquity for their school by pointing to the subject referred to as *Ekayana* by Narada in the Chandogya Upanishad. This Pancharatra or Bhagavata school is presupposed in the Brahma Sutras (II. ii. 42-5), and Sandilya and Narada have contributed texts to it.

Similarly systematised texts for the worship of Devi or Sakti (the Mother Goddess) are not unknown; there are also minor Upanishads devoted to Devi,—the Bhavana, the Kaula, the Tripura and the Devi.

For the further history of these three sects, of Siva, Vishnu and Sakti, we have a bewildering and endless literature, equalled in its number and scope only by the Puranic literature; it is known as Agama and Tantra. Much of the devotional material of the Puranas and Upapuranas themselves was derived from these Agamas and Tantras. A few general points of significance may be first noted to appreciate the sway of this literature. Tantras are common to Buddhism and Jainism, and they also spread to countries of Greater India in South-East Asia, where the unique phenomenon was witnessed of Saivism and Buddhism blending in the composite worship of Siva-Buddha. The temples and the forms of worship established in those Indian cultural colonies were governed by these Agamas and Tantras. Secondly, Tantra is a vague heading which went on taking in local and popular divinities and their worship and gave them just a heightened setting in its over-all scheme; this explains the numberless deities of Tantra, the minor character of many of them, and also the presence in them of unrefined modes of worship; but the role that the Tantra played in the religious consolidation of the country cannot be overlooked.

The name Agama applies to this branch in the sense that its teachings are traditionally handed down, and Tantra emphasises the practical side and procedure of worship involving special initiation (*diksha*) at the hands of a teacher and esoteric practice of the rites, rituals and modes of adoration. The texts are known by both names, and, as compilations or collections, they are referred to as *Samhitas*. Generally speaking, their exposition is in four sections, dealing with philosophical tenets (*jnana*),

meditative exercise (*yoga*), activity in the form of the construction of temples, making of images, etc., (*kriya*) and conduct (*charya*).

The Saiva Agamas are classified into monistic, dualistic and dualistic-*cum*-monistic, numbering respectively 64, 10 and 18 texts. Agama literature governs the whole institution of temple building, worship, consecration of images and conduct of image-worship. The Vaishnava Agama is in two schools, the earlier Vaikhanasa and the later Pancharatra, the latter an enormous library of 225 texts.

The cult of the Mother Goddess,[1] Sakta, has two phases, the refined and the less refined. *Sakti* is Power viewed as the female principle and according to the general Tantric ideology, the philosophy of this school accepts the reality of the world. In the South Indian tradition where the cult is called *Srividya,* Sankara himself is recognised as a teacher of this school and the Sakta is adjusted to Advaita and the worship is generally of a refined type. The Tantras are usually enumerated as 64, but actually there are no less than 327 subsidiary texts, designated as Upatantras.

Mantra, yantra and *mudra* are characteristic of Tantric worship to a greater degree than any other mode. A *mantra* is a mystic formula. The whole alphabet being, according to this school, but an embodiment of the Mother Goddess, every letter has a mystic significance; only, one should have the knowledge to recognise and use them. The whole body of formulæ with which the respective deities are invoked in deep contemplation constitutes the new *mantras,* as distinguished from the older *mantras* of the Vedas. The *mantras* can be learnt only from a teacher in person; the abuse of them is fatal. *Mudras* are mystic gestures accompanying the utterance of the *mantras* or acts of worship or meditation. A *Yantra* or

[1] The Mother Goddess was known in the Hurrian and Hittite pantheon; like her Indian counterpart, she was also mounted on her sacred

Chakra, is a mystic diagram or chart in which the mystic syllables are written at definite places; the Chakra is either drawn on a surface or made in relief; it is in geometrical patterns and encloses the design of a blown lotus; the Chakra *par excellence* is the *Srichakra* of the Mother Goddess, which is a symbolic representation of Srinagara where the Goddess abides; it represents also one's own being. In all the principal temples where the deities worshipped have great and visible power of blessing, there are laid near the images such *yantras* consecrated by those qualified to impart spiritual energy.

Lastly, in common with the more difficult form of Yoga known as Hatha, Sakta Tantra follows the practice of the yoga of the six centres of energy in the body, *shat-chakras,* from the base of the spinal column to the head; the principle of divine energy called the *Serpent-power* or *Kundalini Sakti* is slumbering in the lowest region, the basic plexus, *muladhara*; it has to be roused, and through the artery called *sushumna* passing through all the four intermediate centres, the energy reaches the topmost centre at the head where there is the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrara-kamala*); at its centre is the nectar of immortality which then flows for the delectation of the Yogin.

GRAMMAR, POETRY, ART

In the Upanishads themselves, the whole language is held to be a manifestation of the mystic syllable *OM*; the grammarians who adore language accepted an imperishable, eternal substratum of sound, which was called *Sphota*, out of which perishable utterances and sounds emanate, and of which, as the sole ultimate reality, meaning and objective reality themselves are only a manifestation (*Vivarta*). The roots of this thought go back to the time of Yaska and Panini; in a later age, Bhartrihari codified and expounded it. Linguistic philosophers

animal, the lion. See p. 135, *The Hittites,* by O. R. Gurney.

traced four stages of speech, the *Para,* the most subtle, the *Vaikhari,* the most explicit form used in our verbal transactions, and the two intermediate stages of *Pasyanti* and *Madhyama.* This principle of speech, *Vak,* was identified with the Mother Goddess and absorbed by the *Sakta* modes of worship and the school of Kashmir Saivism. The glorification of speech, *Vak,* as an all-powerful Divinity is already to be seen in the *Rigveda.*[1]

The contribution of the Sanskrit poets has never been viewed in isolation from the main spiritual ideology. Poetry and drama which roused only low desires were condemned as *Asatkavya,* low writing. The poem with a higher purpose was, as all the literary critics stated, akin to *Sastra* in its educative purpose. Apart from æsthetic bliss (*Ananda*), education (*Vyutpatti*) was also one of the ends of literature; and the example that the poet and playwright should show, as for instance in characters like Rama and Ravana, is that one should follow the former and not the latter. This injunction (*vidhi*) to follow the good and this prohibition (*nishedha*) against the bad, are enforced differently by different kinds of writings: they are given as a master's command by the Vedas; the Itihasa-Puranas do the same through illustrative stories in the manner of friendly advice; but poetry and drama, being attractive media, lead the heart to the right path like a beloved spouse.

The philosophy of music and the visual arts is also the same; they are expressions of the Lord who is the embodiment of all beauty and are only spiritual *Sadhanas,* means of realising God. The Vishnu Purana says in a memorable passage, "Poetry and all literary creations, as also all music, are but aspects of the Lord in His form as sound" (I. 22. 84). And the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad itself says (II. 4. 10) that all literature from the Veda

[1] See the hymn translated below on pp. 16-17.

onwards is but the breath of the Supreme Being.[1]

STOTRAS—PSALMS

As already pointed out, the earliest Sanskrit literature (the Veda) is in the form of hymns. The Itihasas and Puranas abound in descriptions, praises and prayers addressed to the different deities; those constantly recurring in the Bhagavata are of very high quality. The poets too incorporated praises and prayers in their poetical works. When later devotional cults grew, temples were raised and the worship of different forms of deities with different modes of adoration developed, a large number of hymns came to be produced by the poet-devotees. These psalms and prayers known as *Stutis* or *Stotras* form a voluminous section, and it is the practice of the pious Hindu to learn by heart and repeat daily prayers and hymns in honour of his favourite deity, in public or privately. Almost all the great saints and founders of schools of philosophy and religion have left hymns.

From the point of view of form, some elucidation is necessary for a proper understanding of a certain type of hymn the growth of which on a large scale may be considered peculiar to Indian hymnal literature, namely, the hymn of the Names of the Lord, stringing together 108, 300, or 1,008 of them.[2] This kind of hymn is based on the doctrine of the Divine Name as a means of salvation, it being the easiest and best suited for the present age when higher spiritual qualifications are difficult of attainment owing to the greater preoccupation of people with worldly activities; the doctrines of this school are fully expounded in the Vishnu and the Bhagavata

[1] See below, p. 103.

[2] The recital of the Names of God is found in other religions. Muslims repeat 99 names of God and the Christians use the rosary; but the *Stotra*-literature based on the Names of God is a peculiar feature of Hinduism.

Puranas[1] and a series of treatises on the efficacy of the Divine Name.

The famous saints of different parts of India have not only left songs in the local languages in praise of the Lord, but also shorter formulæ expressing faith, devotion, surrender and obeisance added to a brief string of Divine Names, known as *Namavalis* or *Kirtanas*, which congregations gathered in a hall or following the image of the deity in a festival utter in chorus; these divine slogans, if we may call them so, are also improvised by the devotees; the whole of the month of Margasirsha (December-January), with which the Lord identifies Himself in the *Gita* and which has sacred associations in other religions too, is devoted to the practice of this *Bhajan*. *Bhajan,* which is practised all over India, is an ecstatic form of devotion in which saints and the masses alike lose their identity.

SAINTS OF THE REGIONAL LANGUAGES

While South India was still under the influence of Jain and Buddhistic sects (7th-8th centuries, A.D.), there appeared on the scene Saivite and Vaishnavite saints known as Nayanars and Alvars, who opposed those two heresies and re-established Hinduism in its devotional form; the Jains and the Buddhists had adopted the popular tongues as against Sanskrit and hence the adoption of the local language by these saints. These Tamil saints went from shrine to shrine singing their hymns on the deities enshrined there. The Tamil devotional movements of the Nayanars and the Alvars were the earliest in the field in the regional languages, and their influence spread all over the country.

The movement of Virasaivism in Karnataka is full of the glory of the Tamil Saiva saints. This reformist

[1] See below, the translation of the Bhagavata, pp. 366-7.

school known also as Lingayata adopted the Kannada language and *Vachana* or sententious prose as the medium of expression. Basava (1160 A.D.), the minister of King Bijjala, is the greatest figure of this school and it had representatives also in the Telugu country.

The Tamil Vaishnava teachers secured the patronage of the Telugu chiefs and spread all over Andhra. The Telugu version of the Bhagavata Purana by Potana in the latter part of the 15th century, and the Telugu songs of Gopanna known as Bhadrachala Ramdas (17th century) and Saint Tyagaraja who flourished in the Tamil country (1767-1847 A.D.) have to be specially mentioned.

In the Kannàda area, just as Tamil Saivism gave birth to the corresponding Virasaiva movement, the Tamil Vaishnava movement had the corresponding one of the Haridasas, the beginnings of which go back to the 12th century. The greatest of the Haridasas is Purandaradasa (1480-1564), saint, preacher and musician, whose countless *Padas* (songs) in simple Kannada, breathe deep devotion and lofty thoughts.

The Maharashtra devotional movement began in the 13th century with Jnanadeva, famous for his Maharashtri exposition of the Bhagavad Gita. Next in importance to him are Namadeva, Ekanatha, Tukaram and Ramdas. Of representatives of Gujarat who gave expression to their devotion and teachings in popular songs, the most noteworthy are Mira Bai (15th century), a princess of Rajasthan, and Narasimha Mehta from Junagadh in Saurashtra (15th century). Among saint-singers of the Hindi-speaking area are Kabirdas, Muslim pupil of Ramananda, the immortal Tulasidas, author of the Hindi Ramayana, and Surdas, blind singer of Agra, of the 16th century. Vidyapati (1350-1450) is the outstanding devotional singer in Maithili (Bihar). In Bengal, to Chaitanya, already mentioned, may be added Chandidas (*c.* 1400) and Rama Prasad. The Eastern outpost,

Assam, became a great centre of Vaishnavite devotional activity, thanks to the efforts of Sankaradeva (1449-1568 A.D.).

The lives of these saints, their devotional songs and the popular expositions of the truths of the great philosophical books they gave in the languages of the people have served to keep alive the spirit of devotion, piety and the sense of higher values in the hearts of the masses. From the earliest times, we see that the high spiritual culture had percolated to the lowest in society and the illiteracy of the masses has never been a bar to their imbibing essential culture. The Mahabharata shows us that the learned Brahman found profound wisdom in the hunter (*Dharma-vyadha*) and the shopkeeper (*Tula-dhara*); Kalidasa's fisherman brought home to the police officers the lesson of the true meaning and dignity of *Svadharma*, one's own appointed duty; and Sudraka's cart-driver enlightened the King's brother-in-law about the other world, virtue and sin, and refused to perform a mean act in the face of every temptation that was offered. All this is the achievement of the exponents of the Itihasa-Purana and the saint-singers[1] who brought the Upanishads to everyone, in every nook and corner of India.

[1] The songs of these poet-singers of the different regional languages of India form thus a necessary complement to the Sanskrit selections in the present anthology; a selection of these songs has been made, but could not be added to this volume.

I. VEDAS: SAMHITAS

RIGVEDA

I. 1. AGNI (FIRE)

9. O Agni, like a father to his son, be thou of easy access to us; be with us for our welfare.

I. 3. SARASVATI (SPEECH)[1]

11. Prompter of pleasing words, instructor of good thoughts, Sarasvati has sustained the sacrifices.

I. 25. VARUNA (LORD OF THE MORAL ORDER)

1-3. Even as erring people, we, O God Varuna, every day violate ceaselessly the observance of your ordinance. Do not make us the victims of death, you who kill those that disregard you; do not make us the objects of your fatal wrath. O Varuna, with praise we appease your mind for our weal, even as a charioteer his tired steed.

I. 48. USHAS (DAWN)

1. O Dawn! daughter of the sky! rise with riches for our sake; rise with ample food; O Goddess of daybreak! rise, you giver of wealth!

I. 51. SUN

11. Rising now with your kindly light and mounting the high heaven, O Sun, do thou destroy the ills of my heart and the illness discolouring my body.

I. 62. INDRA

11. O beauteous Indra, to be adored with hymns and salutations! Those desiring (to perform) the eternal rites, those desiring riches, and those that are wise steal to your presence; like loving wives their loving husband, O powerful Indra, their thoughts touch you.

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[1] Sarasvati was originally a river of plenty; it was soon identified with Speech.

I. 73. FIRE

1, 3. Fire is our wealth like inherited patrimony; helps us to come of age; takes the best and most pleasing course like the teaching of a learned teacher; like a gratified guest, he reposes in the rest-chamber; himself like a priest, he bestows a home on those who cherish him. He who supports the whole world like the Sun, who takes his seat (amidst us) like a benign and friendly prince, before whom we sit like sons in their father's dwelling, who is as spotless as a devoted wife.

I. 90. THE SWEETNESS OF MORAL ORDER

6-8. Sweet are the winds to him who desires for himself moral order; for him the rivers flow sweetly; even so, may the herbs be sweet to us; may the night be sweet, as also the dawns; may the earthly region be sweet; may our Heavenly father be sweet to us; may the lord of the forest be sweet to us; may the Sun be sweet to us and sweet be the kine to us.[1]

I. 90. PRAYER FOR PROPITIOUSNESS

9. May Mitra, lord of the day, be propitious to us; may Varuna, lord of the night, be propitious to us; may the Sun, the revealer of day and night, be propitious to us; may Indra and Brihaspati be propitious to us; and propitious be to us the wide-striding Vishnu.

I. 94. FIRE

1. (As a carpenter) the chariot, so do we refine and decorate this hymn with our intellect for the sake of the worthy Fire who knows everything that is; in his presence our elevated minds are happy; O Fire! enjoying your friendship, let us not suffer injury: we are yours.

I. 97. 8. Like a boat over the river, take us across

[1] This is an oft-used hymn; it is recited particularly when a food-offering is made; in Gautama Dharma Sutras XIX, 13, it is mentioned among hymns of expiatory value.

(our foes) for our well-being, O Fire; let sin depart from us.

I. 113. Dawn

16. Arise! our life, our breath, has come! Away has flown darkness! All around the light comes! (Dawn) has cleared the path for the Sun for his progress. Let us go there where they give increase to (our) life.

I. 159. Heaven and Earth

2. With my invocations, I propitiate the heart of the Father (Heaven) who is never ill-disposed, and the great innate strength of the Mother (Earth); the Parents (Heaven and Earth), with their excellent energy and many excellent safeguards, have provided for their offspring abundant and vast immortality.

I. 164. The Asyavamiya

(A very long mystical and philosophical hymn; expounded as such, independently and extensively, in later times; it has not only anticipations of the Upanishads, but actual lines which appear again in the Upanishads; in Manu's Lawbook, xi. 250, the hymn is mentioned as an expiation (*prayaschitta*) for heinous sins.)

4, 6, 33, 38, 46. Who saw that First when it was born? What is that unembodied that bears the embodied? From earth are breath and blood; whence comes the Soul? Who went to the learned to ask this? .... Ignorant, I ask here the sages of vision who know; not knowing, I (ask) for the sake of knowing; He props up these six worlds. What is that ONE in the form of the unborn? .... Heaven is my father Progenitor; the bond of the act (like sacrifice) is the umbilical cord; this vast Earth is my mother; in between these mutually facing ladles (vaults of Heaven and Earth) is the womb (of beings); .... Cognate of the immortal Over-soul, the mortal (embodied soul) ascends and descends to higher and lower existences, caught up in desire; always associated, they

together go down and up everywhere; but (people) know the one (embodied) but do not know the other (un-embodied soul) .... They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and even the fleet-winged celestial bird Garutman; *the One Reality, the learned speak of in many ways*; they call Him indeed Agni, Yama and Matarisvan.

I. 180. FIRE

1. O Fire! Take us along the right path to wealth; you shining God! You know the minds of all; sever us from the sin that acts crookedly; we offer profuse words of salutations to you.[1]

II. 23. BRIHASPATI

15. O Brihaspati! Offspring of the moral order! That wonderful treasure which the foremost may prize highly, that (wealth) which shines among men with lustre, which brings knowledge, and which makes one blaze with vigour—endow us with that wealth.

II. 33. RUDRA

2. O Rudra! By the most beneficent remedies administered by you, may we attain to a hundred winters; drive away from us haters, and destroy completely sin and the spreading maladies.

III. 62. 10. THE GAYATRI

(The supreme prayer, described as the Mother of the Vedas; named after its metre which means "the saviour of the singer"; revealed to sage Visvamitra; when imparted to one, it gives one a fresh spiritual birth and thus makes him twice-born (*Dvi-ja*); constitutes the spiritual power (*tejas*) that a Brahman gains by reciting and contemplating upon it daily, at the three junctures (*Sandhya*) morning, noon and evening, as long as possible. Its dominant position is such that every school of thought in Hinduism presses it

[1] A frequently recited prayer.

into service, attaching different significances to it, and several *Gayatris* modelled on it have also come into vogue.)

We meditate upon that adorable effulgence of the resplendent vivifier, Savitar; may He stimulate our intellects.

IV. 23. Rita (The Moral Order)

8-10. There are the ancient streams (traditional courses) of the Moral Order (*Rita*); the knowledge of the Righteous Course (*Rita*) destroys sins; the wisdom-laden and shining praise of the Moral Law (*Rita*) makes the deaf hear. Of the embodiment of Moral Law, there are many stable forms, sustaining and pleasing; by *Rita* the pious desire their enduring food; by *Rita* the words (of the wise) have entered (comprehended) *Rita* (sacrifice). The worshipper who honours the Moral Order wins it; the strength of the *Rita* is that of a speedy current; it is for the *Rita* that the vast and profound worlds of earth and heaven are; it is for the Moral Order that these two supreme milch-cows (earth and heaven) yield their milk.

IV. 53. Sun

1. We seek the desirable and great (effulgence) of the Sun, the shining stimulator, the vivifier, the high-minded, so that He may of his own accord, give light unto one who has offered Him an oblation; may He the Great God rouse it in me every day.

VI. 51. On the Efficacy of Worship

8. Obeisance is all powerful; (hence) do I perform obeisance; obeisance is the pillar of earth and heaven; obeisance to the gods; obeisance masters them as, with obeisance, I expiate any wrong that I might have done them.

VII. 31. INDRA

5. O my lord Indra! Do not subject us to the rule of him who speaks harshly, who reviles, and who is ungenerous; may my thoughts be with you.

VII. 54. VASTOSHPATI (Deity presiding over the house)

1. O Guardian of the house! Be thou apprised of us; afford us a comfortable sojourn and freedom from disease; give us what we seek of you; be propitious to our men and animals.[1]

VII. 59. TRYAMBAKA

(Prayer for long life and safety from premature death, from illness etc.; recited with special oblations in fire on one's birthdays or at times of one's serious illness; hence adored as the Death-conquering (*Mrityum-jaya*) Mantra.

We adore the fragrant Tryambaka, the augmenter of growth; may I be freed from Death as a cucumber from its stalk, but not from immortality.

VII. 89. VARUNA

5. O Varuna! Whatever offence we mortals may have committed against the divine beings, whatever moral orders of yours we have, in our ignorance, violated, punish us not, O God, on account of that sin.[2]

VII. 104. THE DEITY SOMA, AND TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

12. To him who knows, it is easy to understand that the word that is true and that is false mutually contend; of the two, that which is true and straight-forward, that Soma cherishes; the false, he destroys.

VIII. 18. ADITYAS (Sun-gods)

10-12. From disease, from the foe, from him who

[1] Recited when one enters a new home.

[2] In Manu Smriti (xi. 252), this hymn is mentioned for expiatory use (*prayaschitta*) in the case of some sins.

intends evil for us, from sin, do ye, O Adityas, keep us safe. Keep away from us, O Adityas, the injurious and the unmindful; O all-knowing Gods! Keep hate away from us. Grant us well, O Adityas of good gifts, that happiness which would free even the erring from the sin.

VIII. 17. VASUS

15. O Vasus! You are gods of mature knowledge. You know well the secret of men's hearts and know the honest man from the deceiver.

VIII. 42. VARUNA

3. O shining Varuna! sharpen our thought and capacity, whereby we disciplining this mind (of ours) may embark on the boat that conveys us safely over all evil.

VIII. 47. ADITYAS

7. O Adityas of equal eminence! Neither ferocious anger nor any heavy (calamity) injures him to whom you have granted happiness; your aids are harmless, your aids are good aids.

VIII. 55. INDRA

13, 14. O Indra invoked by many! We are yours; we have cultivated our intellects only for you; other than you, O Maghavan! there is none that gives happiness. From this ignorance, craving and reproach, free us, O Indra; by your assistance and wonderful course of action, teach us; you are powerful and you know how to do it.

VIII. 89. VAK (Speech)

11. The divine speech, the gods have created; and manifoldly do beings speak Her: praised well (by us), may she, the gladdening Cow of Speech, come to us yielding nourishment and strength.

X. 9. Waters

(Bath in holy lakes, rivers and the sea, and in water specially sanctified by the recital of *mantras,* occupies the primary place in Hindu religion, rites and conduct. The waters figure also much in the cosmogonic and mystic speculations of the Vedic and Upanishadic Seers. Three verses which are most commonly recited when purification through water is resorted to are given here.)

1-3. O Waters! As you are the source of happiness, infuse strength into us, so that we have great and beautiful vision. That essence of yours which is most auspicious, make us share it here, O you who are like loving Mothers! Let us resort to you fully for that riddance from evil whereby you gratify us; O Waters! you have verily created us!

X. 16. Cremation

(An important part of the prayers addressed to a dead person as his body is being cremated; refers to the beliefs regarding eschatology and rebirth.)

3. Let your eye go to the Sun; your life to the Wind; by the meritorious act that you have done, go to heaven, and then (for rebirth) to the earth again, or resort to the Waters if you feel at home there; remain in the herbs with the bodies you propose to take.

X. 63. All Names of God are to be Equally Adored

2. *O Gods! All your Names (and forms) are to be revered, saluted and adored;* all of you who have sprung from heaven, ether and earth, listen here to my invocation.

X. 63. God Described as a Boat

10. May we ascend for our welfare the divine boat of heaven which is spacious, free from defect, comfortable, strong, properly directed, well-oared, safe and unsinking.

X. 71. FRIEND

6. He who has abandoned a friend that knows his duty as a friend, has nothing of worth even in what he speaks; whatever he hears is false and he knows not the path of right action.

X. 85. MARRIAGE[1]

36. (The bridegroom to the bride:) I take hold of your hand for good fortune, so that with me, the husband, you may attain to old age; the divinities Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar and Pushan[2] gave you to me for conducting domestic life.

37. (To the couple:) Be here itself, you two; may you not be separated; reach your full years, sporting with sons, grandsons and delighting in your houses.

44. (To the bride:) May you flourish, without fierce looks and without harm to your husband; be kind to animals, of amiable mind and endowed with all splendour; be the mother of heroes, be devoted to gods and the bringer of happiness; be propitious to our men and women and to our cattle.

45. Bounteous Indra! Endow this bride with excellent sons and fortune; give her ten sons and make her husband the eleventh.[3]

46. (To the bride:) Be thou a queen over thy father-in-law, be thou a queen over thy mother-in-law; be thou a queen over thy sister-in-law, be thou a queen over thy brother-in-law.

47. (To the couple:) May all the gods unite your hearts, may the Waters unite your hearts; may Wind

[1] For some more *mantras* of the marriage, see p. 47.

[2] All the four are solar deities.

[3] The idea is that the husband should always be attended to with love and care as if he were the youngest child.

unite your hearts; may the Creator unite your hearts; may the fruit-yielding Sarasvati unite your hearts.

X. 90. THE PURUSHA SUKTA (The Hymn to the Supreme Being)

(On the Supreme Being and the creation of the universe out of the former set forth as a sacrifice on the part of the Supreme Being. With its pantheism, and references to Yajna, Veda and the social organisation, it is a veritable epitome of the leading ideas of Hinduism. One of the most popular hymns, it is an essential part of the rites of worship, whether in a temple or at home and is recited during the bathing (*abhisheka*) of the Image.

For its efficacy as an expiatory prayer, see Manu xi. 251.)

A

Thousand-headed is the Supreme Being, thousand-eyed and thousand-footed. Enveloping the world all around, He yet exceeded it by a span. All this is the Supreme Being, whatever is past and whatever is in future; He is the Lord of immortality as well as of that which grows by food (i.e. mortal creatures). Such is His greatness, and greater than that too is this Supreme Being; a fourth of Him comprises all the beings; three-fourths of Him are immortal and abide in heaven. With his three-fourths, this Supreme Being stands above and his one-fourth comes here repeatedly; with that one-fourth, He extends on all sides into the animate and the inanimate. From that the cosmic Egg was born and within it this Supreme Being; having been born, He stretched Himself further, (as gods, man, etc.); then He created the earth and the bodies.

In the sacrifice that the gods performed with the Cosmic Being as the offering, Spring was the clarified butter (*ghi*), Summer the fuel, Autumn the oblation. This Cosmic Being who was first born and whom they were to sacrifice, they dedicated as the victim on the

sacred grass;[1] with Him, the gods, the first progenitors and the sages conducted the sacrifice. From this sacrifice of the Cosmic Being, curd mixed with butter was gathered; He (then) made the animals of the air, of the forest and of the village. From this sacrifice of the Cosmic Being, Riks and Samans were born; the metres sprang therefrom; the Yajus arose from it. From Him proceeded the horses, and animals which have two rows of teeth; cattle were born therefrom; therefrom were born the goats and sheep. * * *

His face became the Brahman; from His arms arose the King; the Vaisya is His thighs; from His feet was the Sudra born. The moon was born from His mind, the Sun from His eyes, from His mouth, Indra and fire, and from His breath was wind born. From His navel, there arose the sky, from His head, the heaven, the earth from His feet, the four quarters from His ear, — thus they fashioned the worlds.

Seven[2] were the altar-enclosures of this sacrifice; and thrice seven[3] fuels were laid; in the sacrifice that the Devas performed, they tied up the Cosmic Being as the victim. With sacrifice the gods sacrificed to the Sacrifice.[4] What they did became the primeval institutions; those forces reach up to the heaven where those primary progenitors and the gods are.

B

(With a few changes and additions or omissions the above hymn occurs in all the Vedas. The version occurring in the Aranyaka of the Krishna Yajurveda (Taittiriya,

[1] "Dedicated as the victim by sprinkling it over with the Rains (*Pravrisha*),"—the Atharvaveda reading.

[2] Sayana, the commentator: "The seven metres *Gayatri* etc."

[3] Sayana, "The twelve months, the five seasons, the three worlds and the Sun."

[4] The sacrifice and the object adored with it were both the Supreme Being.

III. 12) is better known among the other versions. Referred to here as the hymn of Narayana also, it is usually recited along with six more verses following it in the next section (III. 13) and called Uttara-Narayana. See also Sukla Yajurveda, XXXI.

The additional verses are given here.)

Taittiriya Aranyaka III. 12. 16-17.

I know that Great Being, shining like the Sun beyond darkness, the Being delighting in Intellect, who having made things with their distinct forms and given them names, is dealing with them through these names. The Being whom the Creator first proclaimed, and Indra who knows the four quarters,—by knowing that Being in this wise one becomes immortal; there is no other path to reach (that immortality).

Taittiriya Aranyaka III. 13.

That Being came out of Water, and out of the essence of earth too; he was above the Creator; the divine architect Tvashtar comes fashioning his form (in the shape of the world); the universe was, at the beginning, a product of the Supreme Being. I know that great Being of the Sun's colour and beyond darkness; he who knows Him thus becomes immortal here; there is no other path for attaining Him. The Creator moves about within the womb (of the Cosmos); and the unborn God is born manifoldly; men of intellect know His source; the creators consider it the abode of rays.[1] He who blazes forth for the gods, who is the leader of gods, appeared before the gods; obeisance to that Light Supreme. Creating the light of that Supreme Being, the gods first expounded His Truth; the gods come under the control of that Brahman who knows thus. (O Supreme Being!) The Sense of Shame in doing a wrong and Prosperity are

[1] Or, "Through Him, the Creators aspire for the position as creators," (Sayana): or 'The wise aspire for the position of Seers."

your two wives; day and night are your sides; the Constellations are your body; the two Asvins, your open mouth. Permit us to have our desired object (spiritual knowledge), permit us to have this world, permit us to have everything.

(The recital generally has in addition the following verses also, sometimes referred to as Narayana Sukta (the hymn of Narayana) of the Mahanarayana Upanishad forming part of the end of the Taittiriya Aranyaka (section x. 11).

The Thousand-headed God, having eyes all over the universe, source of happiness to the universe, the Cosmic God sleeping on the primeval waters, who is the universe itself, the imperishable Supreme abode.

Transcending the universe, eternal, the Lord named Narayana and Hari, the Supreme Being, who is all this that is in the form of the universe; by this universe doth He subsist! The Master of the universe, the Lord of the individual souls, permanent, auspicious, stable, Narayana who is the greatest object to be known, the Soul of the Universe, the refuge supreme. Narayana is the Supreme Brahman, the supreme Truth, the supreme Light, the Supreme Soul. Whatever in this world is seen or heard of, all that, Narayana stands pervading within and without. The Unlimited, the imperishable, the intelligent, the end of the sea (of life), source of happiness to the Universe.[1]

The heart which is like a lotus turned downwards, a span below the neck and above the navel, that[2] heart is to be known as the great abode of the universe. Sur-

[1] Having set forth Its transcendent form, the text now proceeds in the further portion to describe Its immanent form and the manner in which one has to contemplate on that Being within one's own heart.

[2] "There shines enveloped in flames the great abode of all the universe,"—another reading.

rounded by nerves, it hangs down like a lotus-bud; at its end is a fine hole (nerve)[1]; in it is established that Being which is everything. At its centre is the Great Fire, with flames all around and facing all sides; it is the first consumer, that stands digesting and circulating the food, Itself the ageless Knower.[2] Its spreading flames lie across, above and below. Head to foot, It keeps its body hot; at its core is a flame tapering finely upwards, flashing like a streak of lightning in the heart of a dark cloud, fine like the awn of the corn, yellow, bright and subtle; at the centre of that flame is the Supreme Being established; He is Brahman, He is Siva, He is Indra,[3] He is the Imperishable, the Supreme Being, Lord of Himself.

X. 117. SHARING OF WEALTH AND FOOD

1-2. Not hunger, but death have the gods given; and deaths come to him who eats (without giving to others); the wealth of the generous never decreases; the niggard has none to give him happiness. The mean-minded amasses food in vain; I tell (this) in truth; (nay), it is indeed his death; he who nourishes (with his offering) neither the god nor his friend, he who eats alone gathers sin alone.

X. 121. KA: GOD WHOSE FORM IS NOT DETERMINED

(The hymn refers to God in all His attributes, but without calling Him by any name; but *KA* which occurs in the refrain is taken by commentators to refer to the Creator, Prajapati, who is considered the deity of the hymn; the opening and the concluding verses of the hymn do refer to Prajapati, but in view of the tendency to refer to a Supreme unnamed Being gaining increasing prominence, we may take *KA* which has the meaning of something indeterminate, as being intended for God as such without

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[1] The *Sushumna-nadi.*

[2] This sentence is an additional reading.

[3] "He is Vishnu,"—additional reading.

any particular name and form.)[1]

1-10. The Creator was born in the beginning; coming into being, He became one Lord of the created; he props up this earth, and this heaven as well. That Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation. He who gives us soul and strength, whose high command all the gods abide by, whose shadow is immortality and death, That Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation. Who by His greatness became the sole King of the world that breathes and the world that winks, and who rules over these bipeds and quadrupeds, that Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation. He whose glory the snow-laden mountains are said to be, to whom belongs the sea along with the rivers, whose arms those quarters are said to be, that Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation. By whom the skies were made formidable and the earth firm, the sky and heaven were fixed, who measured the space in the sky, That Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation.... Those vast waters which engulfed the universe, bearing the germ of the world and producing the fire, there He as the breath of the gods appeared, That Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation. He who brooded over with His might those waters which produced the Creative potency and the Sacrifice, He who is the One Sovereign God of gods, That Some One who is Supreme, let us worship with oblation. May He not afflict us, He who is the father of the earth, He the promulgator of true sustaining laws,

[1] It is interesting to note here that the ancient Egyptians believed in a similar *KA* which was something which came into a man along with his birth, and on his death acted as his guardian or guide in the heavens; it is interpreted as "the embodiment of the life-force," that mysterious element which distinguishes the living from the dead, as "protecting genius," and as "the personification of those abstract qualities, such as might, prosperity, reverence, splendour. . . ." *cf.* pp. 33-4, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, I.E.S. Edwards, Pelican Book.

He who creates the heaven, He who created the cool and vast waters, That Some One who is God, let us worship with oblation. O Prajapati! None other than you pervades all these beings; may those desires for which we offer oblations to you be realised by us; may we be lords of riches.[1]

X. 125. VAK-AMBHRINI

(Called Ambhrini as the daughter of Ambhrina; the omnipotent Goddess of Speech, Vak speaks here as the knower of the Supreme Brahman, and Herself that Supreme Being, the source of everything.

According to the Brahmanas, it is to be used at the time of the student resorting to the teacher in a rite for infusing the student with intellectual power.

The hymn is in vogue among worshippers of Sakti or Devi, the Supreme Mother Goddess, the fountain-head of all Creative Energy.)

I move about as the Rudras and Vasus, I as the Adityas, as well as the "All-Gods"; I bear both Mitra and Varuna, I bear Indra and Agni, and both the Asvins. I bear the Soma that is pressed, I bear Tvashtar, Pushan and Bhaga. I hold forth the riches (in the form of the sacrifice) to the sacrificer who offers the *Soma*-oblation and gratifies the gods. I am the Queen of the land, the bringer of treasures; I am the knower and the first among those to be propitiated with a sacrifice; Me the gods have placed everywhere, in manifold forms, and immanent in everything. It is by me that one eats; he who sees, he who breathes, he who hears what has been said, does so by me; they that know me not, decline. O you that have ears to hear! listen to this that can be yours by faith; I shall teach you. This that gods as well as men seek, I of my own accord shall tell you: *Whomsoever I love, him I make formidable, him a*

[1] There is even today hardly any rite in which this last verse on Prajapati is not recited and oblations done with it.

Brahman, a man of vision, a man of excellent intellect. I draw the bow for Rudra to shoot the arrow and kill the enemy of Brahman; I wage the battle for the people; I have entered and possessed the heaven and the earth. I give birth to the father (the sky) and over his head and down in the depths, the sea is my birthplace; hence I stand pervading the entire universe, touching the heavens with my body. It is I who blow like wind bringing into being all the worlds and transcending the heaven and the earth; so much am I by my greatness.

X. 129. THE HYMN OF CREATION

(On the Supreme Being who is alike the author and subject of this hymn.)

At that time there was neither non-existence nor existence; neither the worlds nor the sky; nor anything that is beyond; what covered everything and where and for whose enjoyment? Was there water, unfathomable and deep? Death was not, nor immortality there; no knowing of night or day; that One breathed without air, by its own strength; besides that, nothing did exist. Darkness there was, wrapped in front by darkness; undistinguished, all this was (one) water;[1] the incipient that lay covered by void, that one became creative by the power of its own contemplation. There came upon it, at first, desire which was the prime seed of the mind; men of vision, searching in their heart with their intellect found the nexus of the existent in the non-existent. The (very) gods are later to this creative activity; then who knows wherefrom this came into being? Where this creation came from, whether one supported it or not, He who was supervising it from the highest heaven, He indeed knows; or He knows not!

[1] The Satapatha Brahmana interprets this first created Water as *Vak* or Speech, which is called *Apas,* because it is all-pervasive. (VI. i. I. I. 9-10)

X. 137. WIND

3. Wind, blow thou medicine (to us); blow away evil (from us); you are the medicine of the universe, you move about as the messenger of gods.

X. 191. CONCORD

(The subject of this hymn is given as unanimity or *Samjnana* and the Seer of the hymn Samvanana (meaning "bringing round" or "making mutually amicable"). These verses have become quite popular recently and are used often as exhortations to public and state assemblies. Saunaka, in his Rigvidhana, specifically mentions its use and application for securing unanimity and harmony.)

2-4. Come together, speak in agreement, may your minds see alike, even as the gods of yore, in mutual agreement, took their offerings. May your deliberation be uniform, and uniform your conclusion; uniform your mind, and thoughts together; I utter forth a common prayer to you and a common oblation do I offer you. May your intention be one; may your hearts feel alike; may your minds think alike; may there be perfect concord.

SUPPLEMENTARY HYMNS:

Sri Sukta (Hymn to the Goddess of Beauty and Prosperity).

(Widely popular prayer recited with or without oblations in fire for obtaining prosperity and warding off ill-luck. The concept of Sri, the Goddess of beauty, prosperity and richness had exercised great influence on the Indian imagination from most remote ages; the very basis of life here, Sri was always carved till recently, before modern fashions had not destroyed indigenous architectural modes, at the centre on the lintel of houses of the poor as well as the rich; the complete permeation of the Indian mind by the idea of Sri can be realised by the fact that even to this day the only all-India mode of addressing a gentleman and lady is *Sri-man* and *Sri-mati* (one endowed with Sri).)

1-10. O Fire! Invoke on my behalf the Goddess of

Beauty, of fine golden colour, wreathed in gold and silver, the pleasing Goddess of Gold. Invoke for me, O Fire! that Goddess of Fortune who will not leave me, through whom I may gain gold, cow, horse and men. I call forth to my side the shining Goddess of Affluence who has horses in the fore and chariots in the middle, and who is proclaimed by the noise of elephants. May that Goddess of Affluence come to me! Beaming with smiles, surrounded by gold, moist, glowing, gratified and gratifying, the Goddess of Fortune abiding in the lotus and of lotus-hue, I invoke here. The pleasing resplendent Goddess of Fortune, who shines in this world in all Her glory, and to whom the gods resort as the Bestower of Bounty, that Goddess of the Lotus, I seek as my refuge: may my misfortune perish; I seek you, (O Goddess!) * * * Earlier born Misfortune in the form of hunger, thirst and squalor, I shall abolish. (O Goddess of Fortune!) drive out from my home all ill-being and poverty. I invoke here the Goddess of Fortune, heralded by fragrance, unassailable, ever thriving, rich in cattle, sovereign over all beings. May we be united to the Goddess who is the heart's desire, the intention and the fulfilment of the uttered word, the Goddess embodied in cattle and food: may that Goddess of Fortune and Fame come to me.

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III. iii. 2. SWEETNESS

2. I will think only sweet things; I will produce only sweet things; I will bear only sweet things; I will speak only sweet things; May I utter forth words sweet to the gods and words which men love to hear; may the gods therefore protect me so that I may embellish (the occasions with the beauty of my speech), and may our

forebears also applaud me (for my speech).

VII. v. 18. 1. (Sukla Yajurveda XXXI. 22) A National Prayer

(Uttered when an assembly is gathering; also at the end of sacrifices and during the feast in the Sraddha, the recital of this along with that of many others is listened to; in modern times it has been considered to be a suitable national prayer.)

Among the Brahmans, may the Brahman be born with spiritual lustre; in this country, may the king be born a warrior, an archer and chariot-fighter; may the cow be born a milch-cow; the ox, a good draught ox; the horse, a fleet one; the damsel, the object of the city's admiration; the fighter, victorious; and the youth, fit for the assembly; may a hero be born to the performer of the sacrifice; whenever we wish may the cloud rain; may our vegetation ripen with fruits; may there be for us acquisition and conserving (of prosperity.)

IV. vi. THE SATARUDRIYA

(More briefly and popularly referred to as the Rudra, this represents a collection of hymns on Siva from various parts of the Veda. Recensions of it according to the followers of all the different schools are known. Here the text of the Taittiriya Yajushas, which is the longest, is given.

The rite of offering oblations with this hymn (Satarudriya-homa) is already known to the Brahmanas,[1] and among the minor Upanishads, those like Jabala extol the spiritual efficacy of the rite. The ritual texts also mention it. For its efficacy as an expiatory prayer, see Yajnavalkya Smriti III. v. 303-4, 308.

Like the Purusha Sukta (already translated, Rigveda, x. 90), the Rudra is recited during worship at home or in the temple when the deity (Siva) is given the ceremonial bath (*abhisheka*).

In religion, its importance is sufficiently indicated as

[1] See for example, Satapatha Brahmana, IX. i. i. for the Satarudriya homa.

the source of the greatest *mantra* of the Saivas, the *Panchakshari,* the Five-syllabled one, *"Namah Sivaya,"* to which Saivites attach the highest sanctity.

The leading feature of the Satarudriya is the description of the pantheistic form of Siva as being anything and everything in the universe (Visvarupa), associating Him with every aspect of society, activity and Nature. It forms indeed one of the powerful *sadhanas* to contemplate God in His all-comprehensive form.

The text is in eleven sections from which some selections are given here.)

I. * * * That form of yours, O Rudra, benevolent, not terrible, manifesting itself in things not sinful, with that most beneficent form, you who bestow happiness on mankind from your mountain home, reveal yourself to us often. * * * You who abide in the hill, with auspicious words we greet you, that all this world of ours may be free from disease and blessed with a peaceful mind. May He, the Eloquent One, espouse my cause, destroying all reptiles and all demons, He who is the foremost, divine curer. * * * This ruddy blue-necked Rudra who flits across, the shepherds saw, the servant-maids that bring water saw,[1] and indeed all the beings; may He make us happy. Obeisance to you (O Rudra!) of blue neck, of thousand eyes, you who infuse your energy into beings; and whoever be your attendants, to them (too) I pay obeisance. * * *

II. Obeisance to you of the golden arms, the leader, the Lord of the Quarters. Obeisance to (you who are in the form of) the green leaved trees, obeisance to the Lord of Cattle. Obeisance to the bright multi-coloured grass, obeisance to the Lord of Pathways. Obeisance to Him who lies amidst the tawny cattle, the slayer (of foes), obeisance to the Lord of Food. * * * Obeisance

[1] This passage emphasises the fact that the Lord is accessible to the lowliest.

to Him who brings to an end the round of transmigration; obeisance to the Lord of the worlds; obeisance to the Lord of fields who protects with drawn bow. Obeisance to the invincible charioteer; obeisance to the Lord of the forests. Obeisance to the ruddy carpenter; obeisance to the Lord of trees. Obeisance to the counsellor, to the merchant; obeisance to the chief of forest outposts. Obeisance to Him of the earth and the waters; obeisance to the Lord of the green herbs. Obeisance to Him, the Lord of the foot-soldiers who shouts encouragement to them in the battle. Obeisance to Him who runs all around the army, the Lord of all strength.

III. Obeisance to the powerful assailant, the Lord of those that fight. * * * Obeisance to the sitting and the lying, the sleeping and the waking, the standing and the running. Obeisance to the assemblies and leaders of assemblies.[1]

IV. * * * Obeisance to those of experience and the chief of such wise men; to groups of men and their leaders and to republics and their spokesmen. *Obeisance to those of diverse nature, Obeisance to those of every kind. Obeisance to great and small.* * * * Obeisance to the carpenters and artisans, to potters and blacksmiths. * * *

V. Obeisance to the God who is both benevolent and terrible, who destroys beings and is their protector as well, who has a dark and white neck, who has matted locks as well as no hair, who has thousands of eyes and hundreds of bows, * * * Obeisance to the small and puny, to the great and aged, to the grown and still growing, to the foremost and first, to the ubiquitous and the adept in moving. * * *

[1] Many Sanskrit lecturers would quote this at the beginning of their speech.

VI. Obeisance to the eldest and the youngest, the elder and the younger, the middle and the juvenile. Obeisance to Him who is born in the animal or vegetable world. * * * Obeisance to Him who is to be lauded with hymns and who is also there where hymns do not reach. * * * Obeisance to Him who is the sound and the echo (or the word and promise). * * *

VII. * * * Obeisance to Him who resides in the house and is the guardian of the house-site. * * *

VIII. Obeisance to the gracious and ferocious, ...Who is ahead as well as far, to Him who kills without ceasing. * * * Obeisance to the Redeemer, to the bringer of peace and happiness, to the producer of well-being and joy. *Obeisance to Him who is the Auspicious one par excellence.* (*Namah Sivaya*[1] *ca Sivataraya ca*). Obeisance to Him who is the ford and the bank, this and the other shore, the boat and the crossing. * * *

IX. Obeisance to the Lord of the salt-marsh as well as the good road, of the rocky as well as habitable ground; * * * Of the cattle-shed and the house, of the couch and floor, of the jungle and cave, of the waters of lakes and snow, of the sound and the dust, of the dry logs and green woods of grass and shrubs, of the earth and rippling water, of the green leaves on the trees and withered ones on the ground. * * *

X. O Rudra of dark and red form who makest the evil-doers suffer, O Lord of food, Himself bereft of any possessions, of all these men and animals (recited above), do not frighten any one; let not anyone of them perish; let none of them fall ill. O Rudra! that benign aspect of yours which acts like a daily tonic, a benign remedy for terrible suffering, make us happy with that aspect of yours so that we may live. To Rudra, the almighty God

[1] Here is the sacred *Siva-panchakshari-mantra.*

of matted locks who crushes his opponents, we foster this worshipful thought of ours, so that there may be peace to our men and cattle, the world may be well-nourished, and this (our) village will be free from diseases. * * * O Rudra! Injure not our elder or our child, our youth or the fœtus; injure not our father or mother; injure not our dear bodies. Strike not, O Rudra! at our little son, at our life or cattle and horses; slay not in anger our men; we worship you with offering and obeisance. * * *

IV. vii. 1-11. (Sukla Yajurveda XVIII. 1-17) THE CHAMAKA

(While the Satarudriya, owing to the preponderance of the expression *'Namah'* (Obeisance) in its second part, is called *'Namaka,'* the present hymn owing to the frequency of the word *'Cha'* (And) occurring in its invocations is called *'Chamaka.'* In it, the sacrificer or worshipper prays for himself everything imaginable, domestic, social, and material felicity and economic well-being, as well as the plenitude of personal power and character.

It is the *mantra* prescribed for the final oblation in a rite or sacrifice in which clarified butter is filled in the ladle and poured into the fire in a continuous flow called *Vasor Dhara* meaning the abundant and uninterrupted flow (*dhara*) of enrichment (*vasu*) of every description.)[1]

May there be for me in all their excellence, strength and stimulation, purity and inclination, thought and resolve, hymn and verse, fame and listening (to advice), light and heaven, breath and vitality, consciousness and learning, speech and mind, eye and ear, skill and strength, power and stamina, life and longevity, soul and body, happiness and security, limbs and bone, joints and parts.

May there be for me primacy and dominance,

[1] See Satapatha Brahmana (IX. ii. 4. 3. 2.) where this hymn and its use in *Vasor dhara* is expatiated upon; it is said there "All this is riches (*vasu*), all these are desires, and this oblation is a continuous flow of riches."

wrath and indignation, intractability and depth, success and glory, height and expanse, length and continuity, opulence and increase, truth and faith, land and wealth, attractiveness and brilliance, sport and joy, all that has been and will be, prayer and meritorious act, past and future gain, past and future, way and path, prosperity achieved and to be achieved, plans previous and present, idea and scheme.

May these be to me in all their excellences, — weal and comfort, pleasure and desire, wish and satisfaction, safety and betterment, good life and fame, fortune and riches, controller and supporter, welfare and happiness, the public and (their) esteem, knowledge and opinion, creative power and products thereof, plough and harrow,[1] obedience to moral order and immortality; freedom from disease and health, medicine and long life, absence of opponents and freedom from fear, safe movement and rest, fine dawn and fine day.

May it all be for me in excellence, vigour and pleasing word, milk and essence, *ghi* and honey, dinner and drink in company, agriculture and rains, land and produce, money and property, fullness and growth, influence and mastery, plenty and greater plenty, plenitude and greater plenitude, the useful crop and the waste crop, food and freedom from hunger, corns and grains of every description.[2]

May brick and mud, rock and mountain, sand and trees, gold and steel, lead and tin, copper and dark iron, fire and water, creepers and herbs, tender fruits and freely grown ones, domestic animals and wild, past acquisitions and present, consolidation and continuance of well-being, riches and house, action and capacity, pur-

[1] Signifies the striking out of a path and removal of the impediments and levelling.

[2] The text gives actually a list of various grains.

pose and realization, course of action and its progress, may these flourish for me through this sacrifice.[1]

SUKLA YAJURVEDA

(Madhyandina Recension)

I. 5. Vow

5. O Agni, Lord of all vows! I shall observe the vows (like Truth); may I be able to observe them; may the vows be attended with success and fruits; here, from untruth to Truth do I go.

XXXII. HYMN OF THE SARVA-MEDHA (Universal Sacrifice)

(After giving in XXXII the Purusha Sukta, translated above, the Sukla Yajurveda has the following hymn to be used in a sacrifice called *Sarva-medha*, done for the good of the whole universe. The deity is the Supreme Being; the performer, one who realises the Universal presence of that Supreme Being; sometimes this hymn is taken also as an Upanishad.)

1-5. That (the Prime Cause of the Universe) is itself the gods, Fire and Sun; that itself Wind and Moon; that itself is the Veda and Knowledge (or the Brahman); those waters and the Creator are That. From that Spirit were all moments (of time) and lightning born; none grasps Him above, on the sides or at the middle. *For Him there is no counterpart* (*or image*), (for) great indeed is His glory. This God pervades all the quarters; He is the first-born and it is He who is inside the womb; the born and the to-be born are Himself. O ye man! He is in everything, He faces all sides. Before whom nothing was born, who looks after all the worlds, the Creator who sports with His children, He who is with the three lights, (Sun, Moon and Fire) and is Indra (propitiated

[1] Then are invoked the various gods and elements of the sacrifice.

with the sixteen-hymned libation).[1]

8-12. The wise man sees that eternal thing in the deepest recesses of his heart; *in it the (whole) universe comes in as into a single nest;*[2] there, all this universe is gathered (at dissolution) and thrown out (at creation); that all-pervading Being is woven into beings like the warp and woof of a garment. That immortal thing a wise man may expound; its glory is held in secret; three parts of it are in the mysterious (heaven); he who knows them becomes the father's father. He is our kith and kin, our father, the creator who knows all the heavens and worlds, as well as that third heaven where, enjoying immortality, the gods are living as they please. Having comprehended all beings, all the worlds and all the quarters, having worshipped the Vedic word, the first-born, he, the sacrificer, enters, with his Soul, the Supreme Soul presiding over this sacrifice (of Sarvamedha). Having comprehended immediately both heaven and earth, the world, the four quarters and the Sun, snapping the long thread of the Sacrifices, he (the sacrificer) sees That, becomes That, is That. * * *

XXXIV. Siva-Sankalpa (The Hymn of Good Intent)

(This hymn on Mind and the goodness of its intentions has been placed in some of the later manuals on a par with the Purusha Sukta and the Satarudriya. Manu mentions this hymn in his Lawbook (XI. 250) for its potency as an expiation (*prayaschitta*) for heinous sins.)

1-6. That Mind, the divine, which when one is wakeful or asleep, reaches far, which is the far-reaching light of all lights (sense of all senses), may that Mind of mine be of good intent. By which the active and the wise perform the duties in sacrifice and intellectual

[1] Then follow two verses from the *KA*-hymn of the Rigveda, translated above.

[2] *"Yatra visvam bhavaty eka-nidam,"* which inspired the poet Rabindranath Tagore. It occurs elsewhere also in the Vedas.

activities, that which is the wonder-being inside the beings, may that Mind of mine be of beautiful intent. That which is knowledge and fortitude, that which is the immortal light within all beings, without which no act is done, may that Mind of mine be of auspicious resolve. That immortal by which that which is dead, that which is and that which is to be is comprehended, with which the sacrifice with its seven priests grows, may that Mind of mine be of good intent. In whom Riks, Saman and Yajus are established, like spokes in the hub of the wheel, in whom all the thought of beings is woven, may that Mind of mine be of good intent. That which directs men like a good charioteer directing the horses with reins, that which is established in the heart, is immortal and swiftest, may that Mind of mine be of good intent.

ATHARVAVEDA

(Saunaka Recension)

III. 8. To gain agreement[1]

5-6. We bend your minds in unison, your undertakings, your intentions; you who are apart, with an incongruous undertaking, we bring round to us. With my mind, I seize your minds; with your ideas following mine, come along; I place your hearts under my control; come along, following the path that I am treading.

III. 15. For Success in Trade

1, 2, 5. I urge Indra, the Merchant, may He come to us and be our fore-runner; warding off the one who pays not, the beastly competitor who crosses my path, let that masterful Indra be a bringer of wealth to me. The

[1] Prescribed with reference to students, wife or followers.

many paths running betwixt heaven and earth, which the gods tread, may they seek me with milk and *ghi,* so that, with my commerce, I may amass wealth. O Gods! let that money with which, desiring more, I carry on my trade, multiply, never decrease; O Agni! with this oblation, frustrate those who try to ruin the profit I would gain.

III. 17. FOR SUCCESS IN AGRICULTURE[1]

1-4, 8-9. The foresighted fit the ploughs and severally the yokes, the thoughtful ones seeking the good-will of the gods. Harness the plough, place the yokes, and in the prepared furrow here, sow the seed; O Gods! may the ears of corn be full for us; let the ripe (grain) touch the sickle. May the sharp-pointed, well-furrowing, smooth-handled plough throw up for us cattle and sheep, a yoked chariot-drawer (horse), and a plump lass. May Indra hold the furrow, may Pushan guard it on all sides; may the milch cow of the furrow yield us year after year. O fortunate Furrow! we bow to you; turn towards us, so that you may be favourable to us and bear us excellent fruits. The furrow is drenched with *ghi* and honey; all the gods have blessed her; turn hither to us, O Furrow, with milk, overflowing with vigour and fat.

III. 30. FOR CONCORD

I offer to you a unanimous heart and mind, and freedom from mutual dislike; you love one another as the cow its new-born calf. Let the son follow the father and be of one mind with the mother, and let the wife speak to her husband sweet and happy words. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister hate sister; agreeable and of unanimous action, let them speak words with auspiciousness. That *mantra* by virtue of which the gods

[1] Verses 1 and 2 here occur also in Rigveda X. 101. 4, 3; 1—3 and 9 also in Krishna Yajurveda IV. ii. 5.

do not fall apart, nor hate one another, we recite in your home so that the men may be of one thought. With superiors (amidst you) and with your thoughts do not yet go apart, but accomplish together carrying the common burden; come each speaking sweetly to the other; I make you alike and of unanimous mind. Drinking at the same place and with the same share of food, you, I join together in a common yoke; together, you worship fire, surrounding Him as the hub. I make you alike and of one mind; by bringing round all of you, I make you into one group, like gods guarding immortality; morning and evening, may there be goodwill amongst you.

IV. 16. VARUNA (The Superintendent of the Moral Order).

The great superintendent of all this sees as if from nearby; whoever thinks he is going secretly, all that the gods know. He who stands or moves, he who walks crookedly, he who moves hiding or desperately, what two, sitting together, conspire, as the third, him Varuna knows. This earth is King Varuna's, as also this great farflung sky; the two seas are his belly, at the same time he is hidden also in this little water. Even he who may cross the sky will not escape King Varuna; from heaven, his spies are patrolling this earth; with a thousand eyes, they scan through the earth. All that King Varuna sees, that which is between heaven and earth, and that which is beyond (them); he has counted the winkings of people; he calculates them, like a gambler, his dice. Those nooses of yours, O Varuna, each seven, which stand ready to bind threefold and torment, let all of them bind the speaker of falsehood; let them leave aside him who speaks the truth. * * *

VI. 38. For Brilliance[1]

The brilliance that is in the lion, in the tiger, in the adder, in fire, in the Brahman, and in the Sun, the blessed Goddess (of brilliance) who gave birth to an Indra, may She come to us united with splendour. The brilliance that is in the elephant, in the panther, in gold, in waters, in cows and men, . . . The brilliance in the chariot, in the axles, in the bull's strength, in wind, cloud, in Varuna's force . . . The brilliance in the King, in the drum, in the arrow, in the strength of a horse, in the roar of a man, . . . May She the blessed Goddess who gave birth to Indra come to us with splendour.

X. 7. Stambha (the Great Pillar)

(The Supreme Being is here described as the Pillar on which everything hangs and rests.[2] The hymn is a long one of forty-four verses, a few of which are given here.)

8. What is above, below and in the middle, that which the creator created as the universe, to what extent did this Pillar enter therein? The portion (of it) that did not enter, how much was that? 11. In which penance, asserting itself, maintains the higher vow, wherein are the moral order and faith, the waters and the knowledge, tell (me) about that Pillar, who is He? 32. Obeisance unto that Supreme Brahman of whom earth is the foot-stool, the ether is the belly, and who made heaven His head. 38. The mighty adorable Spirit at the centre of the world, engrossed in penance on the surface of water, on Him rest all the gods that are, even as branches round the trunk of a tree.

[1] Used also in the ritual of Vedic study; brilliance comprehends virtues of strength.

[2] In later mythology, Siva is said to have stood as a huge endless column, the head or foot of which, neither Brahma nor Vishnu could get at,—the *Lingodbhava* form of Siva.

X. 8. The Supreme Being

27. You are man and woman, boy and girl; you are the old man tottering about with a staff, and you are the child new born. You are of all forms. 34. That in which gods and men are set, like spokes in the hub of the wheel, I ask you about that flower of the waters where it has been placed (as if) by magic. 37. He who knows the long thread on which these beings are woven, he knows indeed the thread of threads, he shall know the great Brahman. 44. Free from desire, delighting in knowledge, immortal, self-born, satisfied with its own bliss, deficient in no way; Knowing that firm, unaging, (ever) young Self, the Wise one fears not from death.

XII. 1. The Earth

1-3. Great truth, formidable moral order, vow, penance, spiritual knowledge and sacrifice sustain the earth; may that earth, mistress of our past and future, afford us a wide world (for our life). Without congestion, amidst men, She who has many heights, stretches and level grounds, who bears herbs of manifold potency, may that Earth spread out and be rich for us. In whom are the sea, river and waters, in whom grow food and crops, in which (all) this that breathes and moves has its activity, may that Earth give us the first portion.

6-7. The bearer of all, the store of treasures, the basis, who has gold in her heart, who settles all the moving things, bearer of fire, may that Earth of whom Indra is the fertiliser, give us wealth. The vast Earth, whom the gods, without sleep or neglect, guard always, may She yield us sweet and desirable things and bestow splendour on us. 12. That which is your middle, that which is your navel, those that are your nourishment, in them, O Earth, place us; purify us; Earth is my mother; I am the son of Earth; the rains are my father; let him (the lord of Rain) fill (the Earth) for us. * *

16. Let all the people milk Her with amity; O Earth! give me sweet words. * * *

XIX. 8. THE ASTERISMS AND PROPITIOUSNESS FOR UNDERTAKINGS

2-3. The twenty-eight auspicious asterisms together be propitious for me. I seek acquisition and consolidation, and consolidation and acquisition; obeisance to day and night. May there be propitious sunset, propitious dawn, propitious day, and good omen of beast and bird; O Fire! let the oblation be propitious; let there be well-being, O Immortal; having gone to one mortal do thou come back (to me) rejoicing.

7. May there be well-being for us, and freedom from fear; obeisance to day and night.

XIX. 4. AKUTI (Good Intention)

2. The blessed divine Intention, I keep before me; the mother of the mind, may She be easy of invocation for us; whatever hope I cherish, let that be wholly realised; may I see that hope filling my mind completely.[1]

XIX. 9. PEACE

Peaceful be earth, peaceful ether, peaceful heaven, peaceful waters, peaceful herbs, peaceful trees; may All-gods bring me peace; may there be peace through these invocations of peace; with these invocations of peace which appease everything, I render peaceful whatever here is terrible, whatever here is cruel, whatever here is sinful; let it become auspicious; let everything be weal to us.[2]

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[1] Also in Taittiriya Brahmana, X. 36.

[2] Also in Taittiriya Aranyaka, IV. 42.

II. VEDAS: BRAHMANAS & ARANYAKAS

RIGVEDA: AITAREYA BRAHMANA

I. vi. Righteousness is the initiation, Truth is the initiation; therefore he who has taken the initiation for a rite should speak only Truth.

V. iv. With pleasing words (Sunrita) does one offer a sacrifice.

VI. vii. That which a haughty man utters, that which one mad with fury utters, that is demoniac speech (*Rakshasi vak*).[1]

RIGVEDA: AITAREYA ARANYAKA

II. iii. 6. Truth is the flower and fruit of speech; and he will become a master, a man of renown, one of excellent repute, he who speaks this flower and fruit of speech, Truth.[2]

KRISHNA YAJURVEDA: TAITTIRIYA BRAHMANA

I. iv. 8. PURIFICATORY

(Purification is the first essential of all rites and especially so when there had been pollution; water sanctified by recital of purificatory *mantras* is sprinkled on the person and all over the residence, and the water is sipped; the following are some of the *mantras* used in this act called *Punyahavachana*.)

May the *mantras* which are purifying and which lead one to well-being, which yield well all desirable things and are full of milk and other fluids; may the essence that the Seers (*Rishis*) had stored accrue to us; may that immortal fruit deposited with the custodians of the Veda be secured for us. May the purifying *mantras*

[1] The renowned dramatist Bhavabhuti embodies this in a verse of his in his play Uttararamacharita.

[2] In the earlier passage, the mystic syllable *OM* is called *Satya.*

grant us this world as well as the other; may they make our desires prosper, the divine *mantras* that the gods themselves have gathered for us.... May Indra purify me with the shining goddess of right policy (*Suniti*); Soma, with well-being (*Svasti*); Varuna, with prosperity (*Samichi*); may the all-controlling King Yama purify me with his destructions (chastisements) (*Pramrinas*); may Fire purify me with invigoration (*Urjayanti*).

II. v. 7. 1, 3.

O Fire! With the learning of the Vasus, with the eminence of the Rudras, with the brilliance of the Adityas (solar deities), with the thought of the All-gods, and with the movement of the Maruts (Wind), do I offer oblation to you.... This brilliance given by Fire has come (to me) and fame, effulgence, stamina, power and strength for my long life of a hundred autumns; I receive it for my increased efficiency.

II. viii. 8. 5. SPEECH

Speech, the imperishable, is the first-born of Truth, mother of the Vedas, the hub of immortality; may She, in happiness, come to us, in the sacrifice; our protecting Goddess, may She be easy of invocation for us.

II. viii. 8. 8. FAITH

Faith wraps the gods; Faith wraps this entire universe; that Faith, the mother of desires, I increase with (this) oblation.

III. v. 1. 1. TRUTH

I seek Truth, I seek the Moral Order, I seek Immortality.

KRISHNA YAJURVEDA: TAITTIRIYA ARANYAKA

SURYA-NAMASKARA (Prostrations to the Sun)

(The opening book of this part of Krishna Yajurveda is a collection of hymns on the Sun referred to also as Aruna after the Seers of the book, the Arunas; some of

the verses go to the Rigveda; more popularly known as Surya-namaskara, these are recited for the special propitiation of the Sun, particularly on Sundays, birthdays of the individuals or special religious functions, together with 132 prostrations to the Sun, each decad of passages being marked by a prostration. The prostrations have also inspired some modern adaptations, oriented to a course of physical exercise.

Verses on the Sun from the Rigveda, including the Gayatri and the Cosmogonic hymn, are drawn upon. The Waters, and Time as represented by the seasons, year, day, and night, the atmospheric phenomena of light, cloud, thunder, etc., eschatology and the philosophy of the Brahman,—all these which make this long hymn comprehensive are pressed into service for the glorification of the Sun.

A selection of the verses is given below.)

I. i. 1-2. O Gods! May we hear only auspicious things with our ears; O Gods worthy of our adoration! May we see only auspicious things with our eyes; with our limbs and bodies firm and singing your praises, may we attain the God-given length of life.[1] May Indra of hoary renown endow us with well-being; may the nourishing omniscient Sun endow me with well-being; may the wheel of Safety (Sun) which fleets across like a steed[2] endow us with well-being; may the Lord of prayer, Brihaspati, endow us with well-being.

I. vii. 6. The wonderful army of the gods (to fight darkness) has risen, the Eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni, pervading all over the heaven, earth and ether, the Sun who is the Soul of (all) that moves and stands (still).[3]

I. viii. Time-elements (minute to year) abide in

[1] Also in Rigveda I. 89. 8.

[2] Or bird, later the Garuda; already in the Brahmanas (Aitareya, for instance) Suparna (or Tarkshya) is equated with Veda (*Chandas*) and the Gayatri or Vedic *mantra* that bears one to Heaven.

[3] Rigveda I. 115. I.

the waters; the waters are laid up in the Sun; (for) the waters seek the cloud and the lightning is laid up in the Sun; both these worlds are bright (with the Sun's light), this earth and heaven; what is the Being in between these two by which these two are held? It is the all-pervading Lord (Sun) that holds these two worlds; so does sage Vatsa think. * * * Vital air, they say, is His strength; His power is from His own imperishable form; by virtue of the heaven in which, with His three parts the Supreme Being abides, that which is the all-pervading Lord's one highest form, by that does the God (Sun) support. * * * The beings die and again die, being eaten by their own acts, verily like worms that are crushed; then the rays of the Sun purify them.

I. ix. We seek the cure and prevention of ills (that are and are to be) so that we may proceed to the sacrifice, proceed to the sacrificer; may there be divine well-being for us; well-being for men; may we have the healing medicine in the future (also); weal to our men, weal to our animals.

I. xiv. He who rises blazing, He rises taking the lives of all beings, O Sun, not of my offspring, not of my . . . cattle, not of me do thou take the life as you rise. * * *

I. xv. May I be in the place of the Sun of eight forms and shine forth with the effulgence of the Vasus, Rudras and Adityas; may I be in the place of and shine forth with the lustre of *those who are good and truthful.*[1] May I be in the place of and shine forth with the force of the Maruts who in the form of the gale shake and smite; may I be in the place of and shine forth with the effulgence of the Ribhus, the Visve-devas and the all-prompting year (Time).[2] * * *

[1] The good and the truthful men are counted as one of the eight incarnations (*avatars*) of the Sun here (Sayana's commentary).

[2] Then follows a series of such prayers with reference to the other deities.

I. xxvii. With eight courts around the nine gates is this unassailable city of gods (the body); in it is a golden treasury; that is the heavenly region, wrapt in light; whoever knows this city of the Brahman, wrapt in immortality, to him the Brahman, as well as Brahma the Creator, grant life, renown and offspring. This invincible golden city, glowing like gold and wrapt in glory, the Creator has entered. He who knows this becomes rid of old age, ailment or death and reaches (the Brahman) and returns not; he continues here as well as in the hereafter and among the gods as well as the demons. * * *

May I realise the desire (of reaching Brahman); I am that Eternal Being itself; towards this end, may heaven, learning, possession and riches be for me; and (towards that end) may you too, divine waters, place in front here our progeny and dependents.

II. iii. 1-2. O Gods! What offence to the gods we might have, in a light mood, given, from that free me; come to me by virtue of the truth of the sacrifice. The falsehood that we have uttered with our mouth, in our desire to earn livelihood, from that, O All-gods, being pleased with us, free us here. * * * 8. That debt which I incurred here and have not paid back, that debt, the capital with the All-controlling Yama which I am using, from that, O Agni, may I herewith get discharged; by your grace, let me pay it back in this life itself.

II. iv. 1. Unable to take care of my family, whatever debt I have incurred, whatever, unwilling to return to people, I swallowed, from that may Agni and Indra, coming to an understanding, free me.

II. vi. 11. O Gods! Whatever food we ate by committing falsehood, by proposing to give back a thing taken and not giving it back, or by not doing a thing

paid for, whatever is sin in the eyes of the gods, whatever we have received from the unworthy, from all that may Agni free me.

IV. xlii. 30. The deities here, Prosperity, Sense of Shame at doing wrong, Fortitude, Penance, Intellect, Position, Faith, Truth, Righteousness,—may all these rise with me who am rising; may they never leave me. 32. That benevolent Eye of the Gods (the Sun) that moves brightly in the East, may we be seeing it for a hundred autumns; (by the grace of that Sun), may we live for a hundred autumns; may we rejoice for a hundred autumns; may we enjoy for a hundred autumns; may we be for a hundred autumns; may we hear for a hundred autumns; may we speak for a hundred autumns; may we be unvanquished for a hundred autumns; may we be seeing the Sun for a long time.

X. i. At the Time of Bath Early in the Morning

(Known also as the *Agha-marshana,* sin-effacing, mantra.)

I seek the Lord of Waters (Varuna) whose surface is golden; entreated by us, give me a ford (for bathing and purifying myself); the food I had eaten at the house of bad people, the gift that I had received from evil men, the sin that I have committed with my mind, word or deed, of (all) that, may Indra, Varuna, Brihaspati and Sun purify me again and again. * * * The sin from over-eating, over-drinking and receiving from people of violent ways, may King Varuna wipe it off with his hand. Let me thus, rid of evil, impurity and sin, become liberated, ascend to heaven, and attain the world of the Lord of Creation.

X. i. Durga

(This hymn is highly cherished by the devotees of the Mother Goddess.)

That Goddess who is like fire and blazes forth with Her power, the creative power of the self-luminous Lord, sought by devotees for the fruits of their actions, that Goddess, difficult of access (Durga), I seek as my refuge; to you, O Goddess, who are the safe barque for people to cross easily, I make my obeisance.

X. viii. PENANCE

The Moral Order is Penance; Truth is Penance; Learning is Penance; Penance is Peace; Penance is Gift; Penance is Sacrifice; Penance is the three worlds; seek the Brahman and that is Penance.

X. xiii-xv. SUN

That Supreme Lord is (the Sun), this disc that burns; those Rik hymns are there in it, the disc is fashioned by the Riks; that is the world of the Riks; the light that shines therein, that is the Samans, the world of the Samans; the Being in that disc and light,—He is the Yajus; He is made of the Yajus; He is the world of the Yajus. This is verily the three Vedas blazing, this the golden Being who is within the Sun. * * * *Ghrinih, Suryah, Adityah,*[1]—these I am; for him they do penance, speak truth, make sweet offerings; He is the Brahman, the waters, the fire within the waters, the essence, the Immortal Brahman, the three worlds, the syllable OM.

X. xxxv.

(One of the preliminary prayers included in the daily morning worship of Sandhya.)

Sun, Anger and the deities presiding over Anger, save me from the sin committed through anger. What sin I did at night, by mind, word and hands, by feet, stomach or organ of sex, may the deity presiding over the night destroy it. Whatever remains in me as sin, that

[1] Three names of the Sun, the luminous; with OM added at the end, this is the eight-syllable *mantra* of the Sun, *Saura-ashtakshari.*

and my own Self (its doer) here, I am offering as an oblation in the light of the Sun, the source of immortality.

X. xxxix. MEDHA (Intellect)

May the Goddess of Intellect be pleased to come to us, She who is universal in her comprehension, auspicious and of a favourable mind. O Goddess! with your blessing, we shall shun lowly talk, and in the assembly, at the end of the sacrifice, speak about the Supreme. Goddess! One loved by you becomes a Seer (*Rishi*), the very God of creation, one to whom all splendour has come; one who is loved by you attains variegated riches; come to us, O Intellect, with riches.

X. xlix. UTTERED AT THE BEGINNING OF A FEAST

Let the Supreme Being come to me; let the sweetest bliss come to me; may that sweetest bliss which is the Supreme Being come to me. O Supreme Lord of spiritual knowledge! of your offspring, I am a child dear to you. O, You who terminate this nightmare of transmigratory life! Stamp out all misery; O Lord of spiritual wisdom! My vital breaths which are thine I offer as an oblation to you.

X. lxi-ii. "KAMO'KARSHIT"

(A special *japa*, done even now on the occasion of the annual ceremony of Vedic study, *Adhyaya-Upakarma-Utsarjana*. The significance of this is that here the man, the doer of various wrong acts under force of passion, desire and anger, examines the pathology of the condition, fixes the responsibility on the two evils of desire and anger, and by a repetition to himself of this truth, tries to throw out of his being these two evils.

Oblations with the recital of this *mantra* or mere recitals of it are also prescribed as a rite of expiation for different categories of sins committed under urge of lust or wrath. (*cf.* Apastamba Dharma Sutra, IX. 26. 13-14).

Desire did it, Desire does it, I do not do it. Desire is the doer, I am not the doer, Desire is the agent, I am not the agent. O Desire! here this oblation to you! Anger did, Anger does, I do not do. Anger is the doer, I am not the doer, Anger is the Agent, I am not the Agent. O Anger! here this oblation to you!

SUKLA YAJURVEDA: SATAPATHA BRAHMANA

(Madhyandina Recension)

I. i. 1. 1-5. TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

Now this bath.[1] By that, internal purity is secured; impure is man for he utters falsehood; pure are waters; and (he bathes in them) so that he may go to the performance of the rite as a pure man; the waters are sacred; and (he bathes in them) so that he may go sanctified to do his rite; hence does he bathe in water. * * *

There are only these two,—no third—Truth and Falsehood; the gods are all truth, men falsehood;[2] hence (the performer of the rite) goes from men to the gods; and he should speak only truth; that is the vow that the gods observe, *viz.*, Truth; from truth fame comes to you; for fame doth accrue for one who knows thus and speaks Truth.[3]

V. i. 6. 2. 10. HUSBAND AND WIFE

Half of one's own self is she, the wife; hence, till one gains a wife, one does not become re-born (as the child); till then incomplete does one remain.

[1] Bath and its symbolic substitute, the sipping of water called *Achamana,* are the alpha of any religious act.

[2] Also again in III. ii. 4. 2.

[3] These observations are made with reference to the *mantra* in Sukla Yajurveda, I. 5, translated above, and gives an idea of the style and nature of the Brahmana literature which expounds and reinforces the *mantras.*

V. i. 6. 2. 19. MOTHER

No mother harms her son, nor a son, his mother.

V. ii. 5. 3. 4. COW

Verily a mother is the cow; like a mother does she sustain humanity.

VI. i. 1. 1. 1. RISHIS

It is the life-breaths that are called *Rishis* (the Seers) for, they, of yore, before everything, desiring to bring up the world, reached out with exertion and intense thought; hence are they the Reachers (or Seers, *Rishis*).

VI. ii. 3. 3. 1. 39. WOMAN

A woman does not harm anybody.[1]

VI. iv. 2. 5. 5. SPEECH

Speech is intellect; by speech is all this enkindled.

IX. i. 2. 1. 2. 30. TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

Whatever is auspicious (*siva*) and appeasing (*santa*) is purifying (*pavaka*).

IX. iv. 2. 5. 1. 16-17. PRIDE

The gods who continuously spoke only Truth seemed, for the nonce, to be comparatively weaker and less affluent; hence is this that he who continues to speak only truth, appears to be weaker and poorer, but in the end he becomes (strong and affluent) for the gods became so eventually.

On the other hand, speaking falsehood throughout, the demons, like saline soil, swelled up and seemed to prosper; similarly he who speaks falsehood throughout, appears to swell up like saline soil and prosper; he however gets defeated in the long run; for the demons got defeated (in the end).

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[1] This is said to point out the significance of the feminine gender of the word meaning thunder when it is appealed to not to harm them.

XI. i. 7. 8. 1.

Gods and demons, both offspring of the (same) Creator, vied with each other; thereupon with their excessive pride, the demons thought, "Where shall we offer the oblations?" and went about pouring the oblations into their own mouths; by this same inordinate haughtiness, they came to grief; hence one should be on one's guard against excessive pride; for excessive pride is the gateway to ruin.

XI. iii. 7. 5. 6. 1-3. THE FIVE GREAT DAILY SACRIFICES

Five in number are the Great Sacrifices; they are the great continuous sacrifices; the propitiation of all things created (*bhuta-yajna*),[1] of human beings (*manushya-yajna*), of the manes[2] (*pitr-yajna*), of the gods (*deva-yajna*), and of the sacred lore. One should make daily offerings to all creatures; thereby one achieves the propitiation of all creatures; every day one should offer gifts, even if it be only with a cup of water; thus one achieves the propitiation of human beings; every day one should, even if it be only with a cup of water, make offerings to the manes; thus one achieves the propitiation of the manes; every day one should make offerings to the gods, even if it be only with sacred twigs (in fire); thus one achieves propitiation of the gods. Then the propitiation of sacred lore; learning one's own Veda is that propitiation; speech, mind, and intellect are the various utensils of this sacrifice; Truth is the final purificatory ceremony; heaven is the end; he who understands this and every day does his sacred duty, gains three times the world that is gained by one who fills the whole world with wealth and gifts it away; hence one should study his own sacred scripture.

[1] Among those to whom propitiation is done by offerings (*bali*) are the gods, elements, vegetation, spirits, *Dharma,* anything that stirs, moves and acts.

[2] The spirits of the dead.

XI. iv. 1. 5. 7. 1. SVADHYAYA

Then the praise of learning: Dear are learning and imparting it (to others); (thereby) one becomes concentrated in mind; without depending on others, one achieves one's ends daily; one sleeps happily; one becomes the greatest physician unto oneself; control of senses is also gained; singly, one can derive enjoyment; there is increase of knowledge; fame accrues to him and the world turns in his favour. * * *

SAMAVEDA: MANTRA BRAHMANA

II. iv. PRAPADADI-JAPA

(Part of the *mantra* of the above name recited by followers of the Samaveda during the daily morning propitiation of Fire (*Aupasana.*)

5. Penance, Lustre, Faith, Sense of Shame at doing wrong, Absence of anger, Liberality, Fortitude, Righteousness, Strength, Speech, Mind, Soul, the Supreme Brahman,—all these I seek, may they protect me.

II. iv. 14.

(Recited by the followers of Samaveda in the daily noon-time *Sandhya* worship; after the *Gayatri*-repetitions are over, the worshipper looks at the Sun and recites this.)

May I be like the Sun in seeing; like Fire in brilliance; like Wind in power; like Soma in fragrance; like Lord Brihaspati in intellect; like the Asvins in beauty; like Indra-Agni in strength; may my portion be knowledge; may my enemies' portion be sin.

II. v. 9-16.

(Recited by followers of Samaveda in the daily morning and evening *Sandhya* worship, immediately after the *Gayatri-japa.*)

May I attain fame among Brahmans, among Kings and among merchants; may I attain the fame of Truth (as its speaker); may I attain the fame of glorious acts. * * *

O Sun! I have mounted for my well-being, the boat, full and of excellent wings, without any hole, with a hundred oars and capable of taking me across;[1] obeisance to the Sun! May I rise along with you who rise (MORNING). Following you, may I also become firmly established (EVENING).

SAMAVEDA: TANDYA BRAHMANA

I. iii. 9.

May we be united with lustre, milk, penance, with a mind endowed with auspiciousness and good understanding, and true thoughts, so that I may speak to you[2] most beautifully; may I be Indra in personality, the Sun in seeing, Wind in power, Soma in fragrance, a Brahman in dominating eminence.

ATHARVAVEDA: GOPATHA BRAHMANA

I. 16-22. *OM*

The Brahman (Supreme Being) created Brahma, the creator seated on the lotus; having been created, Brahma began to think, "By which single syllable may I be able to enjoy all the desires, all the worlds, all the gods, all the Vedas, all the sacrifices, all the sounds, all the rewards, all the beings, stationary and moving." He practised self-control and saw *OM*, of two syllables,

[1] *cf.* the boat in the Egyptian Solar cult and eschatology.

[2] Those that propose to sing the Samans address this to those in the assembly.

of four morae,[1] the all-pervading, omnipresent, the eternally potent Brahman, the Brahman's own symbolic syllable, of which the presiding divinity is Brahman itself; with it, he enjoyed all the desires of all the worlds, all gods, all Vedas, all sacrifices, all sounds, all rewards and all beings, both stationary and moving. * * *

Therefore, the Brahmana, who, desiring whatever he wants, fasts three nights, sits on sacred grass facing east and keeps under control his tongue and repeats this imperishable OM, for him all objects are realised and all acts are successful.

SUPPLEMENTARY MANTRAS

MARRIAGE

(Some of the *mantras* of the marriage have been given under Rigveda. Here are given some others.)

SAPTAPADI

(Taking seven steps together as symbolic of the joint journey of life. This is the act which completes the Hindu sacrament of marriage, (as recognised by modern Hindu Law too). Addressed by the bridegroom to the bride.)

Having taken seven steps with me, become my friend; may we two, who have taken together these seven steps become companions; may I have your friendship; may I not be separated from your friendship, nor you from mine; with utmost love to each other, gaining lustre (by each other's association), with mutually amicable minds, and enjoying together our food and invigorating things, may we walk together and take our resolves together; may our minds be united, of the same vows

[1] Mora, *matra,* is the duration of time taken by a short syllable; OM, made up of A, U, M is described here as comprising four morae. See below the Upanishads, chiefly Mandukya, on this.

and of same thoughts; I am the Rik (the text), you are the Saman (the tune); I am the Saman, you are the Rik. I am Heaven, you are Earth; I am the seed, you are the bearer; I am the thought, you are the word[1]; I am the Saman, you are the Rik; you act at one with me, so that we may be blessed with a son, may attain prosperity and progeny; come (with me), O lady of pleasing words!

Asmarohana

(The placing of the bride's foot on a piece of stone, symbolic of the stone-like firmness of her devotion.)

Step on this stone; be you as firm as the stone; resist the assailants, overcome the aggressors.

Dhruva-Arundhati-darsana

(Looking up of the Pole star and the Alcor (in the constellation Great Bear), *i.e.*, Dhruva and Arundhati. The former signifies steadfastness and the latter devotion to her lord, sage Vasishtha (one in the Great Bear). The husband points out the two to the wife with these words:)

1. (O Dhruva!) You abide in a stable place; you are the source of stability; you are responsible for stable existence; you are stable; you are the peg of the constellations; you protect me from assailants.

2. When the Seven Sages gave Arundhati precedence over the Krittikas (the Pleiades) and made her position secure, the six Krittikas accepted the leadership of Arundhati (the seventh); may this wife of mine flourish as the eighth (of those stars).

The New-born Child

(The *mantra* with which the father takes the baby.)

From each limb of mine are you born; you are born especially from my heart; you are my own Self

[1] *cf.* the latter Puranic and Tantric conception of Gods and Goddesses, Siva and Parvati, as *Artha* (Idea) and *Sabda* (Word).

bearing the name "son"; may you live for a hundred autumns.

EATING

(Eating is a sacramental act, not a mere physical indulgence prompted by desire. He who cooks for himself only or eats alone has been condemned in a Rigvedic verse (X. 117) already translated; the *Vaisvadeva* preceding eating is a rite in which offering (*bali*) is made to all kinds of beings;[1] one has, besides, to look out[2] for any guest in need of feeding (*atithi*) before he actually sits down.

Food is first offered to the Lord and what is taken is his *prasada,* i.e., what He has been gracious to give us; it is His leavings.

Eating, as the following *mantras* included at the end of the Taittiriya Aranyaka (X. 32-35) will show, is heightened into a rite of offering oblations to the fire of the five vital breaths in the body, *Pranahuti;* and the food itself is sanctified with preliminary *mantras,* which open with the invocation of the *OM* and the *vyahritis* or mystic syllables symbolizing the three worlds, *Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah,* and then the *Gayatri*. The following are the further *mantras.*

On this see also Chandogya Upanishad, IV. xvii, V. i, ii, xix-xxiii.)

O God, the Stimulator! Permit me. You, O Truth, I sprinkle over with righteousness. O Water! You are the immortal covering, spread for the vital breaths.[3] Concentrating on the vital breath (*Prana*), I make this oblation leading to immortality; let it be an auspicious offering to *Prana*. Concentrating on the downward breath

[1] See above the Five Great Sacrifices.

[2] Just before this an interesting *mantra* called *Simhanuvaka* after its opening word, is recited, in which the man exorcises all the ills and sins within himself by saying, "May my anger go to the lion, my hunger to the wolf, my thirst to the desert, my laziness to the brick," and so on.

[3] This is the *mantra* for drinking water.

(*Apana*), I make this oblation leading to immortality; let it be an auspicious offering to *Apana*. Concentrating on the pervasive breath (*Vyana*), I make this oblation leading to immortality; let it be an auspicious offering to *Vyana*. Concentrating on the upward breath (*Udana*), I make this oblation leading to immortality; let it be an auspicious offering to *Udana*. Concentrating on the equalising breath (*Samana*), I make this oblation leading to immortality; let it be an auspicious offering to *Samana*. May my soul be concentrated on the Brahman for the attainment of immortality.

(At the end of eating, water is to be sipped with the following *mantra*:)

O Water! You are the immortal covering.

III. VEDAS: UPANISHADS

ISA(VASYA) UPANISHAD

(So called after its opening words; known also as *Vajasaneyi Samhita Upanishad* after the recension of the Yajurveda and the place therein where it occurs.)

1. Whatever moving there is in the world, all that is embraced by the Lord; enjoy by renouncing it (the world); covet not anybody's wealth.[1] 2. Continuing to carry out the duties ordained, a man may look forward to a hundred years of life; if you so desire, there is no other way except to follow the duties ordained, (for, thereby) evil act does not taint man.[2] 4. That One (the Self) which, unshaking, moves faster than the mind, that which, speeding in advance, the gods (the perceiving senses)[3] could not seize,—that standing still overtakes others who run; therein, breath sustains the acts of all the beings. 5. It moves, it moves not; it is far, it is near; it is inside all this, it is outside all this. 6. He who sees all beings in his Self, and his Self in all beings, has thereby no longer loathing for others. 7. When to the sage all beings are but his own Self, then for him who sees unity, what delusion is there and what sorrow? 8. That Self pervades all over and is the shining light; it has no body, no wounds, no sinews; it is pure and uncontaminated by evil; He, the omniscient Seer, sovereign, self-born, has ordained things as they should be for

[1] Mahatma Gandhi who attached great value to this utterance of the opening verse of the first Upanishad, says: "If all the Upanishads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes and if only the first verse in the Isa Upanishad were left intact in the memory of Hindustan, Hinduism would live for ever." (*Young India,* 11th October, 1923.)

[2] By the observance of the routine of ordained sacred duties scope for profane preoccupation is reduced and eliminated.

[3] Gods—Devas, the shining ones, mean the senses or faculties.

eternity. 11. He who has mastered together both the higher knowledge (of Self) and the lower knowledge (of the gods of sacrifices) overcomes death by aid of the latter, and by the former attains immortality. 15. The face of the Truth is covered by a golden lid; that, O Sun, unveil, so that I may realize the Truth.* * *

KENA UPANISHAD

(Named Kena after its first word, and Talavakara after the Talavakara or Jaiminiya Brahmana of the Samaveda to which it belongs; in four parts, it deals with the Unqualified Absolute (*Nirguna-Brahman*) as well as the Qualified (*Saguna*) Brahman, *i.e.*, God (*Isvara*).)

I

1. (*Pupil*): "At whose wish does the mind speed (to its object)? Urged by whom does the breath, the first, proceed? According to whose desire do people speak this speech? The eye, the ear,—which god prompts them? 2. *Teacher*: "It is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, that which is the Speech of the speech, indeed the Breath of breath and the Eye of the eye. Knowing that, the wise abandon the senses, and on departing from this world become immortal. 3. There the eye does not reach, nor speech, nor mind; hence we do not know its nature; nor do we comprehend how one can teach it. 4. Different is it from the known, and beyond the unknown. So have we heard of it from our forefathers who expounded it to us. 5. That which is not manifested by Speech, that by which speech itself is manifested. That indeed know thou as Brahman, not this (the limited) that people on earth worship."[1] * * *

[1] These statements are then repeated in identical words with reference to the eye, ear and breath.

II

3. "To him who considers the form of Brahman not known, it is known; he who thinks he knows it, knows it not; it is unknown to those who know and known to those who do not. 4. It may be regarded as known if it is known in every form of consciousness; then does one attain immortality; through the realisation of the true nature of Self one attains real strength and through that knowledge, immortality. 5. If one knows this here and now, then there is true fulfilment; if one knows it not here, great indeed is the loss; therefore searching and knowing it in all kinds of beings, the wise, after departing from this world, attain immortality."

III

1. The Brahman once secured a victory for the gods;[1] in that Brahman's victory, the gods took pride; they thought, "Ours alone is this victory, ours alone is this glory." 2. The Brahman understood this view of the gods, and It appeared before them; the gods did not realise what that Spirit was.

3-6. They told Fire: "O Fire, the omniscient, find out what this Spirit is." Agreeing, Fire ran up to It; It asked Fire, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am Fire, the omniscient Fire." "What power is there in you so celebrated?" "Whatever is there in the world, I will burn it up." The Brahman placed before him a piece of straw and said, "Burn this." Agni assailed it with all his force and was not able to burn it; He returned from the Brahman saying that he was unable to know what that Spirit was. 7-10. The gods then went to Wind.... The Brahman placed a piece of straw before him and asked

[1] This episode has been freely rendered by Victor Hugo in the third poem "Supremacy" in his *Legend of the Ages.*

him to blow it away. Wind assailed it with all his velocity, but could not blow it away. He returned therefore, saying that he did not know what that Spirit was. 11-12. Then the gods told Indra: "O, almighty god, find out what this Spirit is." Agreeing, Indra hastened towards it, but the Spirit disappeared. There at the same place in the sky Indra met the resplendent Goddess Uma, daughter of the Himavat mountain; he asked her, "What is this Spirit?"

IV

1. She replied: "It is this the Supreme Spirit (Brahman); it is in this victory of the Brahman that you are enjoying your glory." Indra then realised that the Spirit was Brahman. 6. The Brahman is indeed that which is dear to beings; it is to be meditated upon as the thing which is dearest to beings; he who knows it thus, him all beings love.

7. *Teacher to pupil*: "You asked me to impart the secret teachings (*upanishad*); I have done so; we have really told you the secret teaching about Brahman. 8. Of that teaching, the bases are penance, self-control and sacrifice; the Vedas constitute its several limbs; truth is its abode. 9. He who thus knows this Upanishad, destroys sin and establishes himself in the eternal highest heavenly world; indeed he doth stay there."

KATHA UPANISHAD

(Covering the whole field of Vedanta, the nature of the Ultimate Being as well as the *Yogic Sadhana*, the Katha has the additional appeal of the poetic setting of a pregnant background in which the elderly father devoted to the lower sacrificial path of action is contrasted with his young son inquisitive of the higher path of knowledge of Self and the secret of what happens after death which the God of Death (Yama) himself is made to reveal.)

1. i. 1. Vajasravas (famed for his gifts of food), desiring heavenly rewards performed the Visvajit sacrifice and gave everything away. He had a son named Nachiketas. 4. Nachiketas asked his father, "Father, to whom will you give me?" And twice, thrice did he ask. The father burst out, "To Death I give you!" 5. *Son*: "Of many that are doomed to die, I go as the first; of many just dying, I go as one in the midst. What will Yama (Death) do with me today? 7. Look back at those that were, look forward at those to be; like the corn does man ripen and is born again."

(Nachiketas reaches Yama's abode in his absence and waits at his door for three days; on his arrival Yama is apprised of a Brahman guest waiting at the door.)

8. (*Yama addressing Nachiketas*:) "Three nights have you lived in my house without food, you a Brahman guest to be revered. O Brahman! Obeisance to you; may there be weal for me; as recompense therefore, ask for three boons."

10. *Nachiketas*: "O Death! Of the three, this I ask as the first boon, that Gautama[1] (*i.e.*, Vajasravas), my father, no longer anxious about me, with mind at rest, and free from anger towards me, recognize me and greet me when I depart to him with your leave." 11. (Yama grants it.)

13. *Nachiketas*: "O Death, you know that Fire-rite which takes its worshipper to heaven; impart it to your faithful servant; that Fire-sacrifice by which they that reach heaven attain immortality, this I seek with the second boon." 14-19. (Yama grants it, expatiates on the efficacy of the Fire-rite, calls it after Nachiketas and asks him to choose the third boon.)

[1] Gautama is the family (*gotra*) name; it would apply therefore to the father as well as the son.

20. *Nachiketas*: "After a man is dead, there is this doubt; some say he is, some that he is not; taught by you, I should like to know this; this is the third of the boons."

21. *Yama*: "On this, the very gods have had their doubts; it cannot be solved easily; subtle is this truth. Nachiketas, choose another boon, do not compel me; give this up so far as I am concerned."

22. *Nachiketas*: "Indeed, you say, the gods too have thought about this, and you say, O Lord of Death, that it is not easy of comprehension. Another expounder of it like you cannot be found and no other boon is equal to this."

23-25. *Yama*: "Ask for sons and grandsons living a hundred years, and numerous cattle, elephants, gold and horses; ask for a great domain on earth; and yourself to live as many autumns as you please.... Whatever objects of desire are hard to obtain in this mortal world, ask them according to your wish... Nachiketas, do not persist in questioning me about death."

26. *Nachiketas*: "Of a day's duration are these, O you who are the end of mortal beings! They dissipate the energy of all the senses. All the life taken together is but brief; keep the horses and the dance and music to yourself. 27. Man is not to be satisfied with wealth; we shall get it if we see you; and live we shall, so long as you decree; but the boon that I ask of you is that alone.... Who will take pleasure in a long life?"

I. ii. 1. *Yama*: "The good is one thing and the pleasant is another; the two, each with its manifold ends, bind men; of the two, it turns out well with him who prefers the good; he who chooses the pleasant fails in his objective. 2. Both the good and the pleasant come to man; the wise one examines and distinguishes the one from the other; the wise one prefers the good over and

above the pleasant; the dullard, for the sake of material welfare, chooses the pleasant. 3. You, Nachiketas, after reflecting upon the pleasant and the apparently pleasant desires, have abandoned them; you have not taken this chain of wealth in which most men are caught up. 4. These two are utterly opposed to each other and of different fruits, these that are known as ignorance and knowledge; I know that Nachiketas desires knowledge; many a desire failed to tempt you. 5. Remaining in the midst of ignorance, and deeming themselves wise and learned, the foolish go round and round by manifold tortuous paths, verily like the blind led by the blind. 6. The thought of the other world does not strike the childish one who, stupefied with his delusion of wealth, slips into danger. Imagining that this is the real world, and that the other exists not, he becomes my victim again and again. 7. This, the good, the Self, which is not familiar to many even by report, which even many that listen fail to understand, this of which the expounder is a wonder, the adept seeker is a wonder, and the student enlightened by an adept is a wonder. 9. This knowledge is not to be won (or is not to be set aside) by reasoning, O my dearest! By another is it imparted for one's easy comprehension, this knowledge which you have obtained. Ah! you have persevered in your search for Truth. Nachiketas! May we have many an inquirer like you! 11. Seeing that wherein all desires are included, that which is the basis of the world, the lasting reward of sacrifice, the shore of security, the great object of hymns, the far-reaching, the Self established in itself, you, the wise, O Nachiketas, have firmly abandoned evanescent desires. 12. That ancient God, hard to see, entered into the hidden place, placed in the recesses of the cave of the heart,—seeking Him by contemplation of the Self and realising Him, the wise one abandons jubilation and dejection.

14. *Nachiketas*: "As separate from the duly ordained or prohibited, as distinct from this cause and effect, as other than the past and the future, what you see, that you explain to me."

15-16. *Yama*: "That state which all the Vedas reveal, all the penances bespeak, desiring which men observe an austere life, that state I shall tell you in brief; it is *OM*. This is the imperishable Brahman; this is the imperishable Supreme; by knowing this imperishable (syllable) what anyone desires, that he gains. 18. The all-wise one (Self) is neither born nor does it die; it came from nowhere nor does it become anything; unborn, eternal, permanent, ancient, it does not perish with the body. 19. If the slayer thinks of slaying, and the victim thinks he is slain, both know not; this (Self) neither kills nor is killed.[1] 20. Smaller than the small, greater than the great, the Self of this living being is concealed in the cave of his heart; he that is rid of desires and dejections, sees the glory of the Self by the sublimation of the faculties. 23. This Self is not to be won by teaching, intellect or much learning. It is to be won only by him who seeks that Self; to him this Self reveals its nature. 24. Only he who has refrained from evil conduct, has acquired tranquillity, has gained concentration of mind, has a composed mind, can attain this Self by knowledge. 25. For whom both sections of humanity (Brahman and Kshatra) become food, and Death itself the condiment, who knows it thus and where it is? * * *

I. iii. 3. "Know the Self as the lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind as the reins. 4. The senses, they say, are the horses, and the objects their track. (The Self) yoked with the body, senses and the mind is the enjoyer of experiences. 5. He who is ignorant and has a mind not

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[1] See below the Bhagavad Gita also, p. 404. This has been rendered by Emerson in a well-known poem called "Brahma."

held in restraint—his senses are out of control like an unbroken steed. 7-8. He who is ignorant, of uncontrolled mind and habitually impure,—he does not reach that state of the Self and reverts to the round of rebirth (*Samsara*). He who has gained knowledge, has a controlled mind and is always pure,—he reaches the state after which he is not born again. 9. He who has knowledge as his charioteer and has control over his mind, he reaches the end of the road; that is the all-pervading Lord's supreme abode. 10-11. Beyond the senses are their objects; beyond the objects, the mind; beyond the mind is the intellect; and beyond the intellect is the Great evolved individual Soul; beyond this Great individual Soul is the unmanifest Cause of the world; and beyond the Unmanifest is the Being; beyond the Being there is nothing; that is the limit, that is the farthest goal. 12. This Self, being hidden within all beings, is not apparent, but it is seen by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect. 13. The wise man must restrain his speech in the mind, the mind in the intellect, the intellect in the Great (the first evolute) and that in the unruffled Supreme Self. 14. Arise, awake, resorting to the teachers learn. The sharp razor's edge[1] is hard to traverse; the wise speak of it as a difficult path. 15. He who is devoid of sound, touch and form, devoid of decrease, devoid of taste and smell, the eternal that is devoid of beginning and end, beyond the Great Intellect, the Stable,—knowing Him one is liberated from the mouth of Death. * * *

II. i. 1. "The Self-born made the senses look outwards; therefore one sees outwardly, never the inner Self; but a wise man, desiring immortality and turning his vision inwards, saw the inner Self. 4. That by which one sees the experience of both sleep and waking state,

[1] It is from here that W. S. Somerset Maugham has taken the motto and title of his novel, *The Razor's Edge*. (William Heinemann, London).

knowing that great all-pervasive Self, the wise one ceases grieving. 5. He who realises this individual Self nearby, eating the honey of life, as the sovereign over past and future, has no more need to protect himself from any fear. This is that Truth that you, Nachiketas, asked for. 10. What is here in the world is there in Brahman; what is there, is here; from death to death does he go who sees the two as different. 12-13. The Supreme Being, of a thumb's size, inhabits the interior of one's body, the Lord of the past and the future; knowing Him, one has no more anxiety for self-protection. That is that. The Supreme Being, of a thumb's size, like a smokeless flame; knowing Him as the Master of the past and the future, one has no more anxiety for self-protection. * * *

II. ii. 1. "The city with eleven gates (the eleven openings of the senses of perception and action) belonging to the unborn of straightforward intellect—by holding dominion over it, one does not grieve; himself free indeed, he becomes freed completely. This is that. 3. All the gods serve That which leads one vital breath up and hurls another down, that adorable Being sitting at the centre. 5. Neither by the upward vital breath nor by the downward one, does any mortal being here live; the beings live indeed through something different on which both these breaths are dependent. 6. Ah! Gautama (Nachiketas) I shall expound to you this mysterious eternal Brahman, and what, after death, the Self becomes. 7. Some selves enter a womb in order to take a fresh body, others the static objects (trees, etc.), according to their acts, according to their knowledge. 8. The Being who is awake in those asleep, fashioning one desired object after another, that is the pure light, that is the Brahman, that is called the Immortal; in it do all the worlds abide; none passes beyond that; this is, in truth, that. 9-10. As the one fire, entering the world, assumes many forms, according to each form that it

burns, . . . as the one wind, entering the world assumes forms according to each form (it enters), so also the One that is the inner Self of all beings assumes forms according to each form that it enters and (at the same time) exists outside (that form) also. 11. Just as the Sun, the eye of the whole world, is not contaminated with the external flaws of (one's) vision, even so, the inner Self of all beings, being apart from them, is not affected by the misery of the world. 12-13. The One Controller, the inner Self in all beings, who renders His one form manifold, to those wise men who see Him enshrined in their own soul is everlasting bliss, not to others. The Permanent in the impermanent, the Sentient among the insentient, the One in the many who gives each his allotted fruits (or fulfils their desires), to those wise men who see Him residing within their own selves is everlasting peace, not to others."

14. (Question) "The indescribable supreme bliss they simply consider in terms of 'That is this.' How can I realise that? Does it shine of itself (primarily), or through another (secondarily)?"

15. (Reply): "There the Sun shines not, nor the moon nor the stars; these lightnings flash not there; how then this fire? It is after Him who shines that everything (else) shines; by His effulgence, all this shines.[1]

II. iii. 1. "With roots above and branches below is this ancient *Pipal*[2] tree; that is the Pure, the *Brahman*, that which is said to be immortal; in it are all the worlds; that none transgresses; this is that. 2. Whatever there is, the whole universe, has come out of Him, and before Him, its life, it trembles! It is indeed the Great Terror,

[1] This is recited when, as part of the ritual of worship, camphor-light is waved before the idol. The significance is that the showing of light to One who is the light behind all light is but a token of the devotee's devotion.

[2] *Ficus Religiosa. cf.* Bhagavad Gita, xv. 1, 2.

verily a thunderbolt poised! Those that know this, become immortal. 3. Out of fear for him, the fire burns and the Sun shines; and out of fear for Him, Indra and Wind, with Death as fifth, hasten to their duties. 4. If one is able to know Him ere his body fall, (well and good); (if he is unable to), he has then to take bodies in the worlds of creation. 9. His form is beyond the range of the eye; none sees him with the eye; with the heart, with the intellect, and with the mind (in proper concentration) is he grasped; they who realize this become immortal. 10. When the five sense-perceptions, along with the mind, come to a standstill, and the intellect too no longer stirs, that, they say, is the Supreme State. 11. That steady hold-back of the senses, they consider as the *Yoga*; one should be cautious then, for the Yoga is likely to be gained and lost. 12. Never by word, mind or eye can He be reached; except by one who says, "He is,"[1] who else can attain it? 13. (First) He is to be known only as "He is," (then) in His real form; of these two (forms of knowledge), of the Self first known just as "He is," the real form becomes clear gradually. 14-15. When all the desires that are in his heart fall away, then the mortal becomes immortal; here itself he attains the *Brahman*. When all the knots of the heart here are loosened, then the mortal becomes immortal. Thus far indeed is the teaching. 16. A hundred and one more are the veins of the heart; of them one goes up to the head; ascending through that, one attains immortality; others are for the purpose of going out in diverse directions. 17. Of a thumb's size, the Supreme Being, as the Self inside, lies always in the heart of creatures; Him one should, with firmness, draw out from one's body, like the inner stalk from the sheath of grass; Him one should realize as the

[1] *Cf.* St. Bernard: "Who is God? I can think of no better answer than, He who is. . . ."

Light Immortal, Him should one know as the Light Immortal. * * *"

PRASNA UPANISHAD

(From the Atharvaveda; so-called after the questions (*Prasna*), six in number, asked by six pupils, to which the instruction is given in the form of answers by the teacher, the sage Pippalada.)

Question I

3. Kabandhin Katyayana approached Pippalada and asked: "Reverend Sire! Whence are these beings begotten?"

4. Pippalada replied: "The Lord of all living things, the Creator, desired to create things and meditated; by meditation He created the pair, Rayi and Prana, matter and spirit (food and the consuming fire of life), thinking, 'these two will create manifold beings for me.' 15-16. . . . The world of Brahman is only for those who practise penance and self-control and in whom truth is established. This, the bright world of Brahman is only for those in whom there is no crookedness, no falsehood, no hypocrisy."* * *

Question III

1. Kausalya Asvalayana then asked Pippalada: "Worshipful Sire! Whence does this vital breath (*prana*) take birth?"

3. (Pippalada told him): "From the Self is vital breath born; just as there is this shadow in (cast by) man, even so in the Self is this breath (life) spread; and as a result of the mind's activities it comes into this body."

Question IV

1. Then Sauryayanin Gargya asked him: "Worthy Sire! In a man, who are they that sleep, who that are awake, which is that perceiving power that sees the

dream? To whom does the happiness (which they enjoy) belong? In whom is everything established?"

2. Pippalada replied: "Gargya! Just as the rays of the setting Sun are, all of them, gathered up in that orb of light, and they issue forth again when he rises again, even so is all that gathered up in the mind that perceives everything; hence it is that the individual does not hear, see, smell, taste, touch, speak, take, enjoy, discharge or move, and they say, he sleeps. 3. The fires of the vital breaths alone are awake in this body.* * * 5. Here, this perceiving mind enjoys its greatness in dream. 6. When mind is dominated by the inner light, it dreams no dream; there in this body, the happiness (of deep sleep) ensues. 7. Just as, my dear (Gargya), birds retire into their nests, even so everything is absorbed into the Supreme Self. 9. He that sees, touches, hears, smells, tastes, thinks, knows, acts, the individual Self of the form of consciousness,—he is gathered up in the Supreme imperishable Self. 10. He attains the imperishable Supreme itself, he who understands that imperishable Being devoid of shadow, body or blood, luminous, he, dear Gargya, who knows, becomes omniscient, becomes all.* * * "

Question V

1. Then Saibya Satyakama asked him: "Respected Sire! He among men who, till death, should meditate on the syllable *OM*, what world does he gain thereby?"

2. Pippalada told him: "Satyakama, this *OM* is both the higher and the lower Brahman; therefore a wise man, through this same means (*OM*), reaches one or the other (Brahman). 7. By means of *OM* itself the wise man reaches that lower Brahman as also that higher Brahman which is tranquil, ageless, immortal and free from fear."

Question VI

1. Then Sukesas Bharadvaja asked: "Venerable Sire! Hiranyanabha Kausalya, the Prince, came to me and asked this question: 'Bharadvaja, do you know the Self of sixteen parts?' I told the Prince, 'I do not know it; if I had known, why should I have not told you? Utterly does one perish who speaks falsehood; hence I cannot speak falsehood.' The Prince quietly mounted his chariot and departed. That I ask of you, where is that Self?"

2. Pippalada answered: "Dear (Bharadvaja)! Here itself inside the body is that Self in whom are these sixteen parts.[1] 3. That Self reflected: 'At whose departure shall I depart, at whose stop shall I stand still?' 4. He (thereupon) created vital breath (life); from breath, faith, ether, mind, light, water, earth, senses, mind; (then) food, from food energy, penance, *mantras*, acts, the worlds and names therein. 5. Just as, it is said, these rivers that flow in the direction of the sea, reach the sea and disappear and then their name and form are lost in the sea, even so these sixteen phases of this all-seeing Self, striving towards the Supreme Self attain that Supreme Self and disappear and their name and form are, it is said, lost in the Supreme Self; this person becomes partless and immortal."

MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

(Of the Atharvaveda; called *Mundaka* meaning "head" because of performing the rite of taking fire on the head mentioned at the end of this Upanishad as a preliminary to the study of this Veda or after *mundana*, "shaving" as symbolical of becoming completely rid of everything as a result of Brahman knowledge.)

[1] Prana, etc., which have come to be associated with him; given immediately below.

I. i. 3. Saunaka, a big householder, approached Angiras in due form and asked, "Venerable Sire! By knowing what, is all this understood?"

4. Angiras told Saunaka, "Those that know the import of the Vedas say that two kinds of knowledge must be known, the higher and the lower. 5. There, the lower comprises the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, Phonetics, Ritual books, Grammar, Etymology, Metrics and Astronomy.[1] Beyond these is the higher knowledge by which that which is Imperishable is realised. 5. That which is imperceptible, hard to grasp, without family or caste, devoid of eye, ear, hands or feet, the eternal, the omnipresent, the all-pervasive, the most subtle, that is the undecaying One which the wise see as the source of all beings. 7. Just as a spider ejects and withdraws the web, just as herbs spring from earth, just as hair appears on a person, even so the universe here springs from the Indestructible Being. 8. The Brahman by virtue of its brooding (for creation) swells; from it appears the object of experience (primordial matter); from it life (the creator, Hiranyagarbha); from it mind, the elements of the existent world, the worlds, the acts and their persisting effects. 9. He who knows and comprehends everything, whose penance is only His own contemplation, from Him are produced this creator (Hiranyagarbha), name and form and food (experience).

I. ii. 7.[2] Flimsy boats are these in the form of sacrifice, in which the inferior ritual to be performed with eighteen persons is prescribed; the foolish who gloat over these as the *summum bonum*, proceed again and again to old age and death. 10. Imagining sacrifices and benefactions to be the highest, the fools know not of the other (knowledge of Self) which is the highest good.

[1] The four Vedas and the six limbs or accessories of Vedic study.
[2] 1-6 describe the sacrifices whose pursuit takes one only to the world of good acts, *Svarga*.

After staying in heaven, where the fruits of good acts are enjoyed, they enter this (human) world or those inferior still. 11. But they who cultivate penance and faith in the forest, with tranquillity and knowledge, and living by alms, are rid of impurity, pass through the gates of the Sun to where that immortal Being, the Imperishable Soul is. 12. After examining the worlds gained through acts he who is devoted to the Brahman, shall become detached; that which has not been caused cannot be attained through an act; for knowing that, he should, sacred twig[1] in hand, approach a preceptor, learned in the Vedas and established in Brahman. 13. To him who has thus approached, whose mind is completely rid of passion, and who is endowed with tranquillity, the wise preceptor should impart in truth that knowledge of Brahman whereby he (the pupil) will understand the Truth, the Imperishable Being.

II. i. 1. This is the Truth; just as from the blazing fire, sparks, possessing the nature of fire, arise in thousands, even so, my dear pupil, from the Imperishable, manifold beings are born and into the same (source) they return. 2. Luminous, devoid of form is this Being, existing inside and out and never born; without breath and without mind, and absolutely pure, it is the transcendental, beyond even the primary creative principles. 3. From Him (through His creative manifestation), are born life, mind, senses, ether, wind, light, water, and the earth that is the support of all. 4. Fire (*i.e.*, heaven) is His head; His eyes, the moon and the sun; ears, the quarters; the revealed Vedas, His speech; breath, the wind; heart, the universe; from His feet, earth; He is the inner Soul of all the beings. 7. From that Being the gods appeared manifoldly; Sadhyas, men, animals, and birds; vital breaths and the crops; penance, faith, truth,

[1] *Samit,* a twig of the sacred *Pipal* tree, held by the student in his hand; it is used also as Fire-offering.

self-control and the sacred injunctions (vidhi). 10. All this is the Supreme Being, the sacrificial acts, penance, knowledge and that which is the highest and the immortal; he who knows this Being hidden deep within His own inner being, he, my dear pupil, unties the knot of nescience here itself.

II. ii. 1. "Clear and near is that Being said to be inhabiting the cave; the great foundation on which is based all this,—the moving, the breathing and the winking; know this as being and non-being (or with and without form), the adorable and the most adorable, that is beyond the (ordinary) knowledge of men. 2. That which is effulgent, subtler than the subtle, in which all the worlds as well as their inhabitants are deposited,—that is this imperishable Brahman; this is the vital Breath; this is speech and mind; this is Truth and Immortality; know, my dear pupil, that is the mark to be aimed at. 3. Taking the great Upanishadic missile as the bow, fix thereon the arrow of pointed concentration; drawing it with the mind engrossed with the thought of the Brahman, hit, O dear pupil, the same unswerving target of Brahman. 4. The *Pranava* (*OM*) is the bow; one's self is the arrow; the Brahman. it is said, is that target; shoot with all attention, and like the arrow, you will become one with the target, the Brahman. 5. From whom heaven, earth and ether are woven, and mind too with all the breaths, that One alone, the Self, you understand; give up all other words; this is the bridge to Immortality. 6. Wherein, like spokes in a wheel are all veins gathered, there in the inner heart moves this Being, who multiplies manifoldly; that Self, contemplate as OM; well be it with you in the journey to the shore that is beyond darkness. 9. When that Brahman which is the higher as well as the lower, has been seen, the knot of the heart is untied and all doubts are dispelled. 10. In the great golden sheath is this resplendent and unbroken Brahman;

it is the bright light of all lights which the knowers of the Self know. 11. There the Sun does not shine, nor the moon and stars; there lightnings flash not; whence then this fire? It is that shining one which all others reflect; it is by his light that all this shines. 12. This same immortal Brahman before, Brahman behind, Brahman to the right and left; spread below, as well as above, the same Brahman is all this universe; it is the best.

III. i 1. "Two birds, inseparable mates, cling to the same tree; one pecks the sweet fruit; the other is looking on without eating. 2. Sitting in the same tree, man (one of the two birds) is immersed in sorrow, bewildered by his own incompetence; but when he sees the other happy and master of itself and sees also its greatness, he rids himself of sorrow. 3. When the subject (the individual Self) sees the golden-hued Being, the real doer and master and the Brahman that is the source (of all), then that knower shakes off (both) merit and demerit, becomes clean and attains oneness. 4. Himself as their life, He shines with all the beings about Himself; knowing this, the knower ceases to be an inordinate disputant; sporting in the Self, delighting in the Self, and engaged in acts of spiritual discipline (Truth, etc.), he is the foremost of those who know the Brahman. 5. By Truth and penance is this Self to be realised, by knowledge and constant self-control, this of the form of bright light inside the body, which the recluse-aspirants who have become pure see. 6. *Truth alone triumphs,*[1] not falsehood; the divine path to liberation has been laid with Truth, which the seers who have overcome desire tread, and wherein is also that supreme treasure to be gained by Truth." * * *

III. ii. 1. "He (the wise one) knows this effulgent Brahman, the Supreme abode wherein the world is

[1] This has been adopted as the motto of the Government of India: SATYAM EVA JAYATE.

founded; those passionless, who seek that Supreme Being, are free from rebirth in this world. 2. He who thinks of and covets desires is, by virtue of the same desires, born in the rank he deserves; but for him who has realised the Self, who has reached the end of his desires, here itself do all desires perish. 4. This Self is not to be realised by one devoid of strength or by the neglect of vigilance or by penance unaccompanied by renunciation; but the wise one who strives with these means (strength, vigilance, and penance with renunciation), his self enters the abode of the Brahman. 5. Having obtained this Brahman, the seers attain the satisfaction of knowledge, become realisers of the Self, freed of passions and tranquil; meeting the Omnipresent everywhere, these wise men with their selves absorbed in the Supreme, enter everything. 6. Those who have, by the knowledge of Vedanta, conclusively understood its import (the Brahman), the aspiring recluses who have, by the path of renunciation, burnished the luminous quality of the mind, they, at the time of the final dissolution of their body, having become united with the Supreme Immortal, become liberated in the world that is Brahman.[1] 8. Just as the rivers after running their course disappear into the sea, shedding name and form, even so, the wise one, freed from name and form, reaches the divine Being, higher than the highest. 9. Whoever knows that Supreme Brahman, becomes Brahman Himself; none who is not a knower of Brahman is born in his family; he overcomes sorrow; he overcomes sin; freed from the bonds of heart, he becomes immortal." * * *

MANDUKYA UPANISHAD

(Of the Atharvaveda; of great metaphysical importance; studied together with a set of memorial verses (*Kari-*

[1] Recited always as welcome when Sannyasins, those who have renounced and are in ochre robes, arrive.

kas) in four sections which the advaitic tradition considers as the work of Sankara's grand-preceptor, Gaudapada, and other traditions partly or wholly and severally as Upanishads. Here the basic prose text alone is presented.)

1. This *OM* is (the Syllable), the Imperishable; all this is but its elaborations; the past, the present, the future,—all this is only *OM*; and that which is, transcending the three times, that too is but *OM*. 2. All this (identified with *OM*) is Brahman; *this Self is Brahman*;[1] and this Self is of four grades.[2] 3. Of the waking state, with knowledge of external objects, seven-limbed[3] and nineteen-faced,[4] consumer of gross objects,—the physical man as such (*Vaisvanara*) is the first grade. 4. Of the dream state, perceiving within oneself, with seven limbs and nineteen faces, of enjoyment devoid of gross objects, —the luminous one of impression (*Taijasa*), is the second grade. 5. That is deep sleep where the sleeping one does not fancy any desire and sees no dream. Of the state of deep sleep, unified, one mass of pure knowledge, as if of the form of bliss and enjoying only bliss, and having mind as the (sole) face,—this one of Intelligence (*Prajna*) is the third degree. 6. This (Self resting in its own real state) is the All-powerful, the Omniscient and

[1] Each of the four Vedas has a *Maha-vakya* or Great Affirmation about the Brahman, associated with one of its Upanishads. This is the *Maha-vakya, Ayam Atma Brahma,* of the Atharvaveda.

[2] Sankara clarifies the term *Chatushpat* by citing the simile of currency where a piece of major coin, say a rupee, has four quarter rupees; the four *padas* are not like physical feet, but four grades of the same reality.

[3] The seven limbs: of the Self in the *Vaisvanara* state, the head is luminous heaven; the eye, the sun, within whom are all forms; the breath, the wind that blows in its courses; the vast sky its trunk; water its discharge; earth the feet and fire the mouth.

[4] The nineteen faces are: The five organs of perception and five of action, five breaths and Manas, Buddhi, Ahankara and Chitta which are the internal organs of cognition. In the seven-limb imagery, the Cosmic form was touched upon; here, the individual form is mentioned.

the Immanent Lord; this is the source of all, the begin ning and end of all beings. 7. Perceiving neither internally nor externally, nor even both ways nor the one which is just consciousness; neither knowing nor non-knowing; the imperceptible, indescribable, unnamable, of the sole form of the consciousness of the one Self, the negation of the phenomenal world, *the Peaceful, the Happy, the One without a second* (*Santam Sivam Advaitam*), this they consider is the fourth grade; that is the Self, that is the thing to be realised.

8. This Self is with respect to its indication by the mystic syllable, the *OM*; the grades of the Self are with reference to the morae of the *OM;* for the morae are its components, *A, U* and *M.*[1] 9. The Vaisvanara (physical being) in the waking state is *A*, the first mora of *OM* (*AUM*), for the reason that both are widely pervasive,[2] and the first. * * * 10. The Taijasa (luminous one of impressions) in the dreaming state is *U*, the second mora of *AUM* by reason of eminence and facing either.[3] * * * 11. The Intelligent one in the state of deep sleep is *M*, the third mora of *AUM*, because of measuring and becoming one in the end.[4] * * * 12. The unmeasured further part of *OM*[5] is the fourth grade, the indescribable,

[1] *OM* is made up of the two vowels *A, U* and the nasal *M*, each of the duration of one *matra* or mora; beyond these three morae, *OM* is said to have a further extension of half a mora; see below. A mora is a very short unit of time.

[2] *A* is a comprehensive vowel, say the Veda and the Gita; according to linguistics and its ablaut-findings, the Sanskrit *A* embodies within itself many an Indo-European vowel.

[3] The eminence is that *U* is after *A* and *Taijasa* above *Visva*; facing either, because *U* is between *A* and *M*, and *Taijasa* is between *Visva* and *Prajna*.

[4] *A* and *U* seem to get into *M* and come out, as if being measured out by *M*; and *M* is the concluding sound; similarly, the *Prajna* state takes in the two other states and then throws them out, and is the last of these three into which the first two get merged.

[5] The *Pranava* (*OM*) is considered to have a subtle form extending beyond its three morae.

in which the phenomenal world has completely ceased,—the happy, the One.

Thus *OM* is the Self itself. He who knows thus enters the Supreme Self with his self.

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

(Named after the school of that name belonging to the Krishna Yajurveda.)

I. iv.[1] That *Pranava* (*OM*) which is the head of the Veda, is of the form of the universe, and was born (as essence) out of immortality from amidst the Vedas, —may the all-powerful lord *Pranava* invigorate me with intellect. May I, O divine *Pranava*! be the bearer of the spiritual wisdom that confers immortality. May my body be efficient; may my tongue be sweetest; may I imbibe teachings amply with my ears. O *Pranava*! You are the treasure-casket of the Brahman, covered with intellect; safeguard my learning.* * *

I. ix. Righteousness and the practice of learning and teaching should be observed; Truth and practice of learning and teaching, Penance and the practice of learning and teaching, Self-control and the practice of learning and teaching, Quietude and the practice of learning and teaching, the propitiation of the fires and the practice of learning and teaching, the propitiation of the guest and the practice of learning and teaching, the attending to human affairs and the practice of learning and teaching, progeny and the practice of learning and teaching, are to be observed; Paurushishti who is always in penance thinks penance (alone) need be observed; Naka Maudgalya proclaims that learning and teaching alone suffice: that is verily penance, that is verily penance.[2] * * *

[1] With this *mantra* together with oblation, intellectual power (Medha) is prayed for; the prayer and oblation are also for *Sri* or all-round enrichment.

[2] This, as well as what follows, is frequently cited in modern University convocation addresses, as an exhortation to teachers and

I. xi. THE VEDIC CONVOCATION ADDRESS

Having imparted the Veda, the teacher instructs the pupil:

"Speak truth; do your duty; do not neglect your study. After procuring for the teacher such fees as he desires, see that you do not snap the continuity of your family line. You must not swerve from truth; you must not swerve from duty; you must not neglect your welfare; you must not neglect prosperity; you must not neglect learning and teaching; you must not neglect the duties towards the gods and your ancestors. Adore your mother and father like gods; adore your teacher like a god; adore the guest like a god. You must follow those actions of ours that were blameless, not the others; what good acts we have done, those you must cherish, not the others. Honour those Brahmans (teachers) who are superior to us. Give with faith; do not give without faith; give with plenty, give with modesty, give with fear, give with due regard. Then if you should still have a doubt about duty or conduct—conduct yourself there as is done by such Brahmans as can deliberate well, are devoted to their duties on their own or others' behalf, are not severe, and are desirous of righteousness. As to things that are prohibited, conduct yourself again as do those Brahmans of judgment who are devoted to duty, mild and virtuous.

"This is the commandment, this the advice; this is the inner teaching of the Veda; this is the instruction; thus should one cherish; thus should this be observed." * * *

II. i. He who knows Brahman attains the Supreme; this has been said (in that connection): "He who knows the infinite Brahman who is Existence and Consciousness as deeply embedded in the great ether of the recesses

students to devote themselves to teaching and learning, and as to how students should conduct themselves in afterlife.

of the heart, attains all desires at once and at one with the all-wise Brahman." From that Self, ether appeared; from ether, wind; from wind, fire; from fire, waters; from waters, earth; from earth, herbs; from herbs, food; from food, man; this man is verily made of the essence of food. * * *

II. ii. .... Different from that man made of the essence of food, is the inner being of the form of life, by that being of life is this being of body full. * * * iii. .... Different from this being of life is the (more) inner being of the form of mind; by the mind is the being of life filled.* * * iv. .... Different from this being of the form of the mind is the (still more) inner being of the form of knowledge; by him is this being of mind filled; .... Of this being, Faith is the head, Righteousness the right side, Truth the left side, Concentration the body, Intellect the base. * * * v. ....Different from this being of the form of knowledge, is the (still more) inner being of the form of bliss; by him is this being of knowledge full. * * * Of this being, love is the head; gladness is the right side, joy the left, bliss the body, and Brahman itself the base. And on this there is also this verse: vi. "If one takes this Brahman as non-existent, he himself becomes as if non-existent; if he takes the Brahman as existent, him they consider as having become that Brahman of the form of existence!"....

That Self desired that It would become many and be born; It thought intensely; thinking intensely It created all, whatever there is here: having created it, It entered into the same; having entered it, It became the manifest and the unmanifest, the defined and the undefined, that with a rest and that without a rest, sentient and non-sentient, the true and the false; whatsoever there is, the Brahman *of the form of Truth* (Existence) became all this; hence they call It Truth or Existence (*Satya*). There is also this verse on this:

II. vii. The undifferentiated (Brahman) existed in the beginning; thence arose the differentiated (world); thus did it unfold itself; hence is that called well-done (sukrita); What is done well is indeed delectable[1]; only by gaining that felicity does one become blissful. Who could breathe, who could live, if this bliss were not enshrined in the ether of the heart? It is that which makes one blissful. When one becomes established in security in the Brahman, the unmodified, unembodied, undefined, unfixed in any place or rest, then does one attain the state of freedom from all fear. When, however, the same individual makes in respect of this Brahman the slightest distinction, then fear is born; that Brahman itself becomes the fear for that unthinking man who sees (difference). * * *

II. ix. "That from which, without reaching it, words return along with the mind, knowing that bliss of the Brahman, one is not afraid of anything."

He is not tormented by the thought: "What good here did I fail to do? What evil did I do?" For him, who knows this (the Self), both these (good and evil) alike please the Self; indeed both are pleasing to the Self for him who knows thus. This is the secret teaching.

III. i-ii. Bhrigu Varuni approached his father Varuna (asking): "Worshipful Sire! Teach me the Brahman." To him Varuna spoke thus: "Food, life, eye, ear, mind, speech,—that from which all these beings are born,[2] that by which the born ones live, that which they reach in the end and enter into, that you learn as the Brahman."

Bhrigu (then) performed penance; and performing penance, he found *food* as the Brahman; from food indeed are beings born, by food all beings live, and food

[1] *Raso Vai Sah*—taken by some late literary critics as referring to the aesthetic bliss called *Rasa* and as furnishing the Vedic basis for the theory of *Rasa*.

[2] *Cf.* The Brahma Sutras I.i2 —*Janmadyasya yatah.*

they reach in the end and enter into. Having realised that he again approached his father Varuna asking: "Teach me the Brahman." He said to his son: "Know the Brahman through penance; penance is Brahman." Bhrigu did penance; having done penance,

iii-vi. he saw *life* as the Brahman.... Having done penance he saw *mind* as the Brahman.... Having performed penance he saw *knowledge* as the Brahman.... Having performed penance he saw *bliss* as the Brahman. From bliss are all these beings born; by bliss those who are born live, bliss they reach in the end and enter into.

This is the science of Bhrigu and Varuna, the conclusion of which is in the *bliss* within the great ether of the heart. * * *

The Brahman who is in the individual and in the Sun, are both one; he that *knows* thus turning away from this world comprehends this world as the self of the form of food, then of life, then of mind, then of knowledge, and then of bliss.

Consuming as he pleases, assuming forms as he pleases, passing over all these worlds, he is singing the Saman song of the Self:

"Ah! What a wonder! I am the food (object), I am the food, I am the food; I am the eater of the food, the eater of the food, the eater of the food; I am the poet that unifies the two; I am the poet, I am the poet; I am the first-born of the Truth; born before the gods; I am the hub of immortality; he who gives me away, preserves me; I, the food, consume as food him who eats (without giving), I dominate the entire universe, I am effulgence like the Sun. He who knows thus attains the Brahman. This is the secret teaching."

AITAREYA UPANISHAD

(Of the Rigveda; so called after the sage Mahidasa Aitareya; referred to also after the place of its occurrence as Bahvricha-Brahmana Upanishad.)

I. i. 1. This was (all) one Self at the beginning; nought else winked; the Self reflected, "I shall create the worlds." 2. That Self created these worlds. * * *

III. 1. Who is he whom we adore as the Self? Which (of the two, the higher and the lower Selves) is the Self (to be adored)? Is He that by which one sees, hears, inhales, smells, expounds speech, or distinguishes between the sweet and the sour?

2. That (the instruments of knowing) is his heart and his mind. Identification, command, arts, intellect, erudition, perception, retention, thinking, opinion, impulse, remembrance, undertaking, resolve, exertion, desire, attraction,—all these form the names of (that one ultimate) Knowledge. 3. This (embodied) Self (in the form of life), this Indra (king of gods), these five gross elements (*mahabhutas*), earth, wind, ether, water and light, together with their subtle particles (*tanmatras*); the causes, and other species hatched in egg or bred in womb, born of heat and seed, horses, cattle, men, elephants,—whatever living being is here, moving and flying, and whatever is static, . . . all that is led by Knowledge and established in Knowledge; Knowledge is the eye of the world; Knowledge is the final basis; *Knowledge is Brahman.*[1] 4. That Vamadeva,[2] by this Self of Knowledge, rose above this world, attained all his desires in this heavenly state of the Brahman, and became immortal; indeed he became immortal.

CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

(Belongs to the Samaveda; extending to eight chapters, the Chandogya, together with the Brihadaranyaka that follows, forms the mainstay of Upanishadic philosophy; along with the Brihadaranyaka again, it is rich in

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[1] Of the four *Maha-vakyas* or Great Affirmations of the four Vedas, this, *Prajnanam Brahma,* is the one belonging to the Rigveda.

[2] Or any aspirant like him.

the *Upadesa* (imparting) of mystic meditative exercises (*Vidyas*). As an Upanishad of the Samaveda, it begins with the meditative exercises based on the chanting of Samans.)

I. i. 1. One should worship the syllable *OM*,[1] the Ud-githa;[2] now to its exposition:

2. Of these beings, the earth is the essence; of the earth, water; of the waters, herbs; of the herbs, man; of man, speech; of speech, the hymn (*Rik*); of the *Rik*, chant (*Saman*); of the *Saman*, Udgitha.[3] 3. This eighth, the Udgitha, is the inner essence of all essences, the ultimate, the most adorable. * * *

II. xxiii. 1. Three are the branches of Dharma; sacrificial rites, Vedic study, gifts,—this the first; Penance is the second; the student of the Veda residing with the teacher and to the end working himself to death in the teacher's establishment is the third; all these attain to the worlds where merit is enjoyed; (but) he who is established in the Brahman attains immortality.* * *

III. xiv. 1. All this is verily Brahman, produced from it, absorbed into it and living by it; so should one meditate in tranquillity. Now, man is made of resolves; of what resolve he is in this world, that he becomes on

[1] The grammarian-philosophers built up a philosophy of sound, according to which *Sphota*, or an imperishable substratum of sound (*sabda*), was the Brahman, and from it meaning (*artha*) and the objective world issued forth; its greatest classic expounder Bhartrihari was a predecessor of Sankara in the restoration of the place of the highest authority to the Scripture (*Agama*) and in building up monistic ideas; but Sankara parted company on the question of *Sabda Brahman*; to him, *OM* is only the nearest name and symbol of the Brahman, as he puts it clearly here in his commentary, and never Brahman itself; elsewhere also in the Upanishads, the highflown descriptions of *OM* are to be taken, according to Sankara, as due to its being the proximate and highest symbol of the Brahman and it is as such that it is recommended by the Upanishads again and again for worship.

[2] *Ud-githa* means that which is sung aloud.

[3] Later musical theory believes that all the seven notes of the Indian gamut are derived from *OM* or the *Pranava-nada* (*Ud-githa*).

his death; so he should resolve to meditate on Brahman. 2. Absorbed in contemplation, embodied as it were in knowledge in the form of light, of true intentions, like ether in subtlety and all-pervasiveness, with the whole universe as his act, with everything become desirable to him, with every smell fragrant to him, with every taste relishable to him, comprehending all this, without a word, without any yearning. 3. "This my Self within my heart is subtler than a grain, subtler than barley, subtler than mustard, subtler than a canary seed, subtler than even its core; and this Self within me is vaster than ether, vaster than heaven, vaster than all the worlds. 4. That for which all acts are duties to be performed, all things are desirable, all smells fragrant, all tastes delicious, that which comprehends all this, that which speaks and yearns no more;—this Self of mine within my heart is that Brahman; departing from this world, I shall become that;"—he who takes resolve like this and doubts it not, (attains that state of the Brahman). So doth Sandilya say. * * *

IV. i. 1. There was Janasruti Pautrayana, who gave with faith, gave much and provided much food for others; all round he erected halls so that people from all sides could come and eat of his food. 2. Then one night swans flew (over his dwelling) and thus did one swan address another: "Lo, Bhallaksha, Bhallaksha! Bright as Day is the glory of Janasruti Pautrayana spread; do not approach it, lest it burn you." 3. The other swan replied: "What glory does he possess that you should speak of him as if he were Raikva of the cart?" The first asked: "Who is Raikva of the cart and why do you speak of him?" 4. The other replied: "As in a game of dice to one who has thrown the highest cast called *Krita,* all the lower ones too come automatically, even so, whatever good the people do, all that comes to Raikva; and if another knows what Raikva knows, to

him also, I say, would all the good of others come like that." * * *

(Janasruti who hears this conversation repeats this to his minstrel-charioteer in the morning and the latter is sent in search of Raikva, the Brahman.)

He (the charioteer) found a person underneath his cart, scratching his itch, approached him and asked: "Worshipful Sire! You are Raikva of the Cart?" "Yes, Yes," replied Raikva. The charioteer returned with the news that he had found Raikva.

IV. ii.

(Janasruti approached Raikva with presents and asked for enlightenment on the God that Raikva worshipped.)

IV. iii. 1-4. (Raikva said:) "Air is the end; when fire goes out, it vanishes into air; when the Sun sets, it vanishes into air; when the moon sets, it vanishes into air; when waters dry up, they vanish into air; air absorbs all this into itself. This is with reference to the gods. Now with reference to one's self; life-breath is the end; when one sleeps, it is into breath that speech, sight, hearing and thought retire; it is breath that absorbs all this. These are the two finalities, air in the gods and breath among the senses.

5-7. Now, when Saunaka Kapeya and Abhipratari Kakshaseni were being served with food, a student came and asked for food; they gave him none. He said: "That one God who swallows all these four great ones (fire, etc., or life, speech, etc.), who is the protector of the world, him, living in many forms, O Kapeya, O Abhipratarin, mortals do not see; it is for Him that this food is intended; and it is to Him that you have denied food." Saunaka Kapeya reflected on his words, and came to him and said: "The Soul of gods, father of the beings, of golden teeth, and all-devouring, He is never devoid of intelligence; His glory is great; Himself unconsumed, He consumes even what is not food, (*viz.*, the other consumers); that

do we, O Brahmacharin, worship. (And turning to the servants he said:) "Serve this (Brahmacharin) food."* * *

IV. iv. Haridrumata Gautama said to Satyakama Jabala: "My dear Satyakama, fetch the sacred twig; I shall initiate you; you have not transgressed truth." And having initiated him, Haridrumata separated from the flock four hundred cows, all lean and weak, and said to him, "My dear Satyakama, tend these." Driving them out, Satyakama said, "I shall not return until they are multiplied a thousandfold." And he stayed away for a number of years until the cows became a thousand in number.

IV. v. 1-3. Then the bull in the herd (the god of Air) addressed him: "Satyakama!" "My Lord," responded Satyakama. "My dear Satyakama, we are a thousand now; take us to the teacher's dwelling. I shall teach one quarter of the Brahman." Satyakama asked him, "Lord, please tell me." The bull (Vayu) said to him: "The part called the eastern quarter, that called the western quarter, that called the southern quarter, that called the northern quarter,—these four parts together form one quarter of the Brahman; it is called the 'Illuminated' (*Prakasavat*). He who realises thus and meditates upon this fourfold quarter of the Brahman as the Illuminator, becomes a thing of splendour, conqueror of the worlds of light." * * *

IV. vi. 1. "Fire will reveal to you another quarter of the Brahman." Next day, he drove the cows; at the place which they reached in the evening, Satyakama kindled the fire, stationed the cows, offered the sacred twigs, sat behind the fire, facing east. * * * 3. . . . Fire said to him: "Earth is one part; ether, one; heaven, one; ocean, one; thus, my dear, is the fourfold quarter of the Brahman called 'the Infinite' (*Anantavat*). 4. He who knows thus and worships this fourfold quarter of the Brahman as the Infinite, becomes unrestricted in this world and attains the limitless worlds. . . ."

IV. vii. "The Swan (Sun) will reveal to you another foot of the Brahman." * * * The Swan (Sun) flew to him, . . . and said, "Fire is one portion; the sun, a second; the moon, a third; and lightning, the fourth; this, my dear, is the fourfold quarter of the Brahman known as 'the Effulgent' (*Jyatishmat*)." * * *

IV. viii. "The water-fowl will reveal a foot of the Brahman to you." * * * The water-fowl flew to him, . . . and said: "Breath is one part, eye one, ear one, mind one; this, my dear, is the fourfold quarter of the Brahman called 'the Rest' (*Ayatana*)."[1]

IV. ix. 1-2. He reached his teacher's dwelling place; the teacher addressed him, "Satyakama, you shine indeed like one who has known the Brahman; who taught you?" He said, "Others than men; you, revered Sire, reveal it to me, according to my desire. I have heard from those like your worshipful self that only the knowledge that is learnt from a teacher is best." The teacher taught the same (as set forth above) to him; nothing was omitted. * * *

VI. i. 1-6. There was Svetaketu Aruneya; to him his father (Aruni) said: "Svetaketu, undergo discipleship duly; my dear, none in our line has failed to study the Vedas, and been a Brahman merely by birth." Twelve years of age at that time, Svetaketu sought a teacher and returned when twenty-four, having studied all Vedas, thinking much of himself, imagining himself learned, and stiff. To him his father said: "My dear Svetaketu, you are elated, you consider yourself learned, and are conceited; did you ask of your teacher that teaching by which even that which has not been heard of, becomes heard, that which has not been thought of, becomes the object of thought, and that which has not been known, becomes known?" "My lord, what is that teaching?"

[1] This, according to Sankara, is the mind.

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asked Svetaketu. The father said: "My dear Svetaketu, just as with one lump of clay all that is of mud becomes known, the change being only a name, the product of speech, and the truth is that it is all clay. * * * Even so, my dear, is that teaching." * * *

VI. ii. 1-4. "My dear, in the beginning, there was only this being, one and without a second. Some say here that in the beginning, there was this non-being, and one and without the other, and from non-being, being was born." The father continued: "My dear, how can this be? How can being come out of non-being? Therefore, my dear, being alone existed at first, one only, without a second. It reflected, 'Let me become many and be born.' It created light. Light thought, 'Let me become many and be born' and produced waters. * * * The waters thought, 'Let us become more and be born,' and produced food." * * *

VI. iii. 1-2. "Of the beings (so born), three are the origins,—those born of egg, those of living beings, and those of seed. The Supreme Deity thought: "I shall enter these three divinities (of light, water and food) with this life, namely, my own Self, and shall unfold names and forms." * * *

VI. iv.-vii.

(Then is described how the Supreme Being unfolded the various forms by combining in each all the three, fire, water and food, while keeping the dominant nature of each.)

VI. viii. 1-7. Uddalaka Aruni told his son Svetaketu: "Know from me, my dear son, of the state of sleep. When a man is said to sleep, he becomes united, my dear, with Reality; he attains (*apiti*) to his own real Self (*Svam*); hence they say that he is sleeping (*svam-apita*): he has really been re-united with his own self. Just as a bird, tied by a string, flies about in all directions, does not find rest anywhere else, and returns to the

cage, even so, my dear, is that individual self; it wanders about in all directions, and failing to find rest anywhere else, returns to the true Being of life (*Sat* and ***Prana***); for, my dear, mind is tied to that Being of life. * * * By its offshoot, food, seek the root, water; by its offshoot water, my dear, seek the root, fire; by the offshoot, fire, my dear, seek the root, the true Being (*Sat*); all these beings, my dear, are rooted in this *Sat,* in it they abide, in it are they established. * * * My dear, when a man departs from this mortal life, his speech becomes one with the mind, the mind with the life-breath, the life-breath in fire, the fire in the Supreme Deity. This true Being, this subtle source of the world, that is the soul of everything; that is Truth, that is the Self, *That Thou Art!*[1] O Svetaketu."

VI. ix. 1-2. "Just as, my dear son, honey-bees produce honey, collect the honey from various trees and make it all into one, and just as in that honey, the essences have nothing to distinguish them, 'I am the juice from this tree, I am the juice from that,' even so, my dear, all these beings, having become one with the one True Being (*Sat*) are unaware that they have all come into Him." * * *

VI. x. 1-2. "My dear, these rivers of the east flow eastward; those of the west, westward; they arise from the ocean and to the ocean they return. As all is absorbed in the ocean and the rivers do not have the sense, 'I am this, I am that,' even so, my dear, all these beings spring from *Sat* but know not that they have sprung therefrom." * * *

VI. xi. 1-3. "My dear, just as when this huge tree is hewn at its roots, middle or top, it bleeds but continues to live, being pervaded by life, and absorbs water and

[1] '*Tat tvam asi*'—One of the four Great Affirmations (***Mahavakyas***) of the Upanishads associated with the four Vedas and the best known among them.

flourishes happily, but when life leaves one branch of it after another, it shrivels, branch by branch, until it withers completely when life has left all parts of it, even so, my dear, know that when life departs, the body perishes but not life itself; this is the subtle source of life, it is the Soul of everything." * * *

VI. xii. "Bring the fruit of the Nyagrodha tree." "Here Sir." "Open it." "It is opened, Sir." "What do you see?" "Sir, I see seeds, as small as atoms." "Split one of these." "One is split, Sir." "What do you see inside?" "Nothing, Sir." "My dear," the father told Svetaketu, "from that minute source which you cannot see, this huge Nyagrodha springs; believe this, my dear." * * *

VI. xiii. 1-2. "Drop this salt into water and come to me tomorrow morning." Svetaketu obeyed. The father said: "Bring the salt that you put in overnight." The son reflected and did not know where it was. The father said: "Ah! It has been dissolved; sip it at the top; how does it taste?" "It is salty." "Sip it at the middle, how does it taste?" "Salty." "Throw it away and come to me." He obeyed saying that salt remains intact there for ever. To him the father said: "Here in your body, my dear, you do not realise the True Being, *Sat*; but here itself is it."

VI. xiv. "My dear, just as one brings a man blindfold from the Gandhara country, and leaves him in a deserted forest, and that man cries aloud to east or north, south or west, 'I have been brought blindfold'; and then one removes the bandage over his eyes, and tells him: 'This way lie the Gandharas, go in this direction'; and enquiring from village to village, that informed and intelligent man reaches the Gandharas, even so here, *he who has a teacher, knows.*[1] To one such, there is only so

[1] This text that he who has taken a teacher knows (*Acharyavan purusho veda*) emphasises that knowledge, particularly spiritual, is

much delay as it takes for the release from the body; then he becomes one with the Supreme." * * *

VII. i. 1-3. Narada approached Sanatkumara saying, "My lord, teach me." Sanatkumara said to him: "Tell me first what you know, then II shall tell you what is beyond that." "Worshipful Sire! I know the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvan, the fourth Veda, Itihasa-Purana, the fifth, grammar, the Veda of the Vedas, the lore relating to the propitiation of the spirits of the ancestors (*Sraddha*), mathematics, portents, calculation of time, logic, polity, mythology, the Vedic accessories of phonetics, ritual and metrics, demonology, military science, astronomy, poison-cures, and the arts and lores connected with gods and men. This, revered Sire, I know. I who know all this, O revered Sire, am only a knower of the texts of the *mantras*, but not of the Self. I have heard from those like your respected self that he who knows the Self overcomes sorrow. So revered Sire, I am dejected; may you, revered Sire, take me to the further shore."

To him Sanatkumara said: "Whatever you have learnt is only the name." * * * 4. . . . (all) this is Name; worship Name (as Brahman). * * *

VII. ii. "Speech is greater than Name; for it is speech that reveals the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, . . . up to the worm, fly and ant; speech reveals virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, good and bad, the pleasing and otherwise, ... speech reveals all this; worship speech (as Brahman)."

efficacious only when one learns it directly from a teacher in person, and not from a book. This is true of every school of thought in Hinduism; hence one finds again and again, particularly in the Upanishads, references to the teacher-pupil successions and the association of particular teachings with certain teachers. The idea occurs already in Rigvedic hymn X. 32.7: "One ignorant of the place asked one who knew; and instructed by the one who knows, he goes to his destination."

VII. iii. "Mind is greater than speech . . . Mind is the Self, mind is the world, mind is the Brahman; worship mind (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. iv. 1-2. "Will is greater than mind; when one wills, he thinks, utters speech, utters it in names; in names are all *mantras* unified, and all acts, in *mantras*. * * * Meditate upon Will (*Sankalpa*) (as Brahman)."* * *

VII. v. "Mental awareness (*Chitta*) is greater than will.* * * Worship mental awareness (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. vi. "Meditation is greater than awareness; the very heavens appear to be in meditation; the very ether appears to be in meditation; the sky appears to be meditating; the waters appear to be meditating; the rocks appear to be in meditation; so also gods and men; hence whichever man here attains greatness among men has a share of the fruits of meditation. Those that are small, quarrel amongst themselves, point out the defects of others and indulge in slander; the great ones however show that they have realised the fruits of meditation. (So) worship meditation (as Brahman)." * * *

"Knowledge is greater than meditation . . . . Worship knowledge (as Brahman).

VII. viii. "Strength is greater than knowledge; a hundred men of knowledge are overcome by one strong man; . . . by strength doth the world stand; worship strength (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. ix. "Food is greater than strength . . . . Worship food (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. x. "Water is greater than food; when there is not sufficient rain, lives take ill; food becomes scarce; all these forms are but water; worship water (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. xi. "Fire is greater than water . . . . Worship fire (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. xii. "Ether is greater than fire.... Worship ether (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. xiii. "Memory is greater than ether; Worship memory (as Brahman)." * * *

VII. xiv. "Wish (*Asa*) is greater than memory; fired by desires does one's memory learn by heart the *mantras*, perform the acts, wish for sons and cattle and aspire to get the best of both worlds." (So worship wish as Brahman.)

VII. xv. 1. "Life-breath is greater than wish; like spokes in a hub are all things set in breath.... Life-breath is father, mother, brother, sister, teacher, the knower of the Brahman. * * * 4. All these are breath; he who sees this, thinks this and knows this, becomes an expounder of the transcendent principle (*Ativadin*)."* * *

VII. xvi. "Actually, the Ativadin is he who speaks of Truth as the transcendent reality." "Respected Sir, let me speak of Truth as the transcendent reality," said Narada. "Then, Truth must be known," said Sanatkumara. "Truth, O blessed Sire! I desire to know," said Narada.

VII. xvii-xxiii. "When one understands, one speaks truth; without understanding, he does not speak truth; only on understanding that one speaks truth; so understanding should be understood," (said Sanatkumara). (Said Narada:) "I desire to understand understanding." (Sanatkumara): "When one thinks, one understands; without thinking one does not understand; by thinking one understands; mind is therefore to be understood." (Narada): "Lord, I desire to know the mind." "When one believes, he thinks...." "Lord, I desire to have faith." "When one dedicates oneself, he acquires faith.... When one is dutiful, one is firmly dedicated. ... When one is happy, one performs his duty; in sorrow, one does not; it is in happiness that one does; one

should understand what happiness is." "My lord, I desire to understand happiness." "That which is without any limitation is happiness; there is no happiness in the finite; the infinite alone is happiness; the Infinite is to be understood." "My lord, I desire to know the Infinite."

VII. xxiv-xxv. "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, is conscious of nothing else, that is the unlimited; when one sees another, hears another, is conscious of another, that is limited. What is unlimited is immortal; what is limited is mortal." "My lord, where is that unlimited established?" "In its own greatness, or rather not in any greatness. In the world cows and horses are said to be greatness, elephants and gold, servant and wife, corn-fields and houses; I do not speak of a greatness like this in which one is established in another; but I speak of that which alone is below and above, behind and before, on the right and left, that alone is all this. Now this is taught as the 'I' and nothing else; it is 'I' that is below and above; it is 'I' that is behind and before; it is 'I' that is to the left and right; it is 'I' that is all this. Then this is taught as the Self, nothing else; it is the Self that is below and above, behind and before, on the right and left; the Self is all this. He who seeks like this, thinks like this, knows like this, becomes one who delights in the Self, sports in the Self, consorts in the Self, enjoys the Self, he becomes Lord of himself; he moves as he pleases in all the worlds." * * *

VII. xxvi. ...There is this verse here: "He who sees thus sees not death, illness or misery; he who sees thus, sees everything, obtains everything and in every manner." * * * "When what is taken in (by the senses) is pure, the mind is pure, when the mind is pure, the memory is steady; when memory is secure, all knots are untied." To Narada, who had washed himself of the stains, the blessed Sanatkumara shows the other shore of

darkness; that Sanatkumara, they say, is God Skanda, they say, he is indeed God Skanda.

VIII. i. 1. Now within this little lotus-like home in this city of Brahman, the body, there is the tiny ether; that which is inside is to be sought; it is to be known. * * * 3. This ether within the heart is as much as this ether (outside); inside itself both the heaven and earth are laid: both fire and air; both Sun and moon; lightning and stars; whatever man has here and even that which he has not, all that is laid in here.* * * 5. . . . By the aging of the body, this does not age; by the killing of the body this is not killed; this is in truth the city called the Brahman; in it are (all) desires comprised; this is the Soul in which evil and good alike have ceased to exist, devoid of old age, death, sorrow, hunger, or thirst, of true desires and of true intentions. * * * 6. Just as here, whatever of this world one gains by one's acts is run through, even so the other world gained by merit is spent; therefore those who depart without knowing the Self and these true desires do not have freedom of movement in any world; but they who depart knowing the Self and the true desires enjoy the freedom of all the worlds. * * * ii. 10. Whatever direction his desire takes, whatever he desires, comes at his mere wish and with it he becomes great. iii. 1. The true desires are shrouded by the false. * * * 2. . . . In the same ether of the heart one's true desires are smothered by untruth; just as those who do not know how to discover treasure-trove, even though walking over the place, would not unearth a treasure of gold buried beneath it, even so all these beings, passing into it (in deep sleep) day after day, do not gain this world of the Brahman (within their heart); they are led away by untruth. 3. This Self is in the heart; this is the etymology of the word *Hridaya* (Heart); "In the heart is He" (*Hridi ayam*); one who is conscious of this fact every day at-

tains the heaven. 4. Now this serenity (in deep sleep) which arises above this physical state, reaches the Light Supreme, attains its own innate form; this is the Self; that is the immortal and fearless; this the Brahman; the name of this Brahman is Truth (*Satyam*); so spoke (the teacher). 5. These are the three letters (in *Satyam*), *sa-ti-yam*; what is *Sat* (existence) is immortal; then what is *ti* is mortal; then *yam* is that by which the two are held in control. * * * iv. 1. Then this Self is the dam that saves this world from being washed away; day and night do not cross this dam; neither good nor bad deed; all evils retire from it; the world of the Brahman destroys all evil.* * * 3. Only to those who gain this world of the Brahman through continence does this world belong; for them there is freedom of movement in all the worlds.

VIII. v. 1-5. What they call sacrifice is only continence. . . . What they call propitiation with sacrifice is only continence; what they call the long sacrificial session is only continence. . . . What they call silent meditation is only continence. . . . What they call fasting is only continence. . . . What they call the retirement to the forest is only continence. * * *

VIII. vii-viii.* * * The words of Prajapati (Creator) about Self both the gods and the demons heard of; they said: "Ah, we shall search for the Self, by finding which one attains all the worlds and all desires. Indra, of the gods, started out, and Virochana, of the demons; independently, the two, sacred twig in hand, approached Prajapati. The two observed studentship for thirty-two years; Prajapati (then) asked them, "Desiring what, have you been staying here?" They said, "That Self wherein all is destroyed, which is devoid of old age, death and sorrow, hunger and thirst, of true desires and resolves,—that is to be sought, that is to be known; and he who searches for it and knows it obtains all the worlds

and all the desires. These are being propagated as your Lordship's words; desiring that Self, we have lived here (as students)."

Prajapati told them: "The Person seen in the eye is the Self; this is immortal and fearless; this is Brahman." "Now, Lord, who is he, the Person (image) who appears on the waters or in the mirror (when one looks into them)?" (asked Indra and Virochana). Prajapati replied, "He alone is seen in all these." Prajapati told them (further): "Look into a dish of water; and tell me if you do not understand the self?" They looked into the dish of water. Prajapati asked them, "What do you see?" They replied, "Lord, we see the whole of ourself, our replica, to the very hairs and nails." Prajapati told them, "Put on excellent ornaments and good dress and decorating yourself look into the dish of water.... They (did so and) said: "Lord, just as we are ornamented and dressed well, and decorated, even so are we in this dish of water, with excellent ornaments and dress, and decorated." Prajapati said: "This is the Self; this is immortal and fearless, this is the Brahman." With their hearts at rest, the two departed.

Looking at the two Prajapati said, "Without grasping the Self, without seeking and knowing it, these two are going; gods or demons, they will take this as the teaching and will come to grief."

With his heart at rest, Virochana went to the Asuras and taught them this teaching that Self alone was to be adorned and served and that by adoring and serving the Self, one attained both the worlds, this and the other. Therefore it is that even now they call one who gives not, believes not and offers no sacrifices, "Alas, he is an Asura." This is the knowledge of the Asuras,—they decorate the body of the dead with perfumes and flowers and

food, dress and ornaments; with this they think they are winning the other world.[1]

VIII. ix. But without returning to the gods, Indra thought about this danger: "Just as the person represented by the image becomes well-dressed and decorated, even so it will also become blind, squint and maimed in the limbs, and following the death of the body, will also die; I do not see anything to be enjoyed in this personality seen in the image." So, with the sacred twig in hand, Indra came back to Prajapati. Prajapati told him: "Indra, with your heart at rest you went away with Virochana; now for what reason have you returned?"

(Indra gave expression to the danger that he saw in the belief of the image-person as the Self.)

Prajapati: "Indra, so it is; but I shall instruct you again; stay here for another thirty-two years." Indra lived there as student for another thirty-two years. To him Prajapati said:

VIII. x. "This person who moves about in dreams in a grand manner, he is the Self; he is immortal and free from fear, he is the Brahman." With his heart at rest, Indra departed, but without going to the gods, he saw danger here too. "Even though this dreamer does not become blind or squint when his body becomes so, and is not affected by the defects of his body, . . . yet these seem to affect him and haunt him; he appears to be conscious of pain, and even weeps as it were; I do not find here any sign of joy." With sacred twig in hand, he returned to Prajapati. * * * Indra underwent training for another thirty-two years and Prajapati told him:

VIII. xi. "Where one sleeps deeply, in full serenity, and dreamless, that is the Self; It is immortal and fearless; It is the Brahman," said Prajapati. With his heart at ease, Indra departed, but without returning to the

[1] *Cf.* the elaborate Egyptian practices and beliefs regarding the dead.

gods, he saw danger there again. "Even one in deep sleep does not know himself as 'I am,' nor does he know these beings; he has become extinct; I do not find anything to rejoice in there." Again, sacred twig in hand, Indra came to Prajapati. * * * Indra lived there for five more years; the years became one hundred and one.... Prajapati told him:

VIII. xii. "Indra, this body is mortal, ensnared by death, it is the lodging of the immortal unbodied Self; becoming embodied, the Self becomes caught up in the pleasant and the unpleasant; so long as it is in the embodied state, there is no overcoming the pleasant, but when it exists, dissociated from the body, the pleasant and unpleasant alike touch him not. * * * That is the person par excellence. It then goes about laughing, playing and in dalliance with women or in enjoyment of vehicles or kinsmen, never having in mind this body, an artificial product into which it had come. Like a horse or an ox harnessed to a carriage is this Self (individual) joined to this body. Now, at the place marked by the pupil of the eye, there the Self is in the eye, and the eye itself is only the instrument of seeing; that which has the knowledge of 'I smell this' is the Self, the nose is but the instrument of smelling; that which has the knowledge, 'I speak this,' is the Self, the tongue itself being the instrument of speaking; that which has the knowledge 'I hear this,' is the Self, the ear itself being the instrument of hearing. That which has the knowledge, 'I hear this,' is the Self, the ear itself the divine eye; with this divine eye (of the mind) the Self sports seeing all these desires and those that are in the world of the Brahman. This Self the gods adore, and they therefore have all the worlds and all desires; he who seeks that Self and understands it obtains all the worlds and all desires." Thus said Prajapati, indeed thus did he say. * * *

VIII. xv. This, Brahma told Prajapati, Prajapati handed down to Manu, and Manu to men.

Having learnt the Vedas at the teacher's abode according to the rules laid down and in the leisure available after attending upon the teacher, having completed his study and having been discharged, one should settle down to family life in a holy place, continue his Vedic studies, build up a body of virtuous men (sons, pupils, etc.), establish firmly all his senses in the Self, exerting no pressure on any being, outside of the ordained sacred acts,— he who conducts himself like this to the end of his life, attains the world of the Brahman, he never returns, indeed he returns not.

BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

(Belongs to the Sukla Yajurveda; forms the closing part of the extensive Brahmana, the Satapatha, of that Veda; itself extensive, the Brihadaranyaka is one of the two most important Upanishads. It opens with the interpretation of the inner meaning of the greatest of all the scripture-ordained acts, the horse-sacrifice, *Asvamedha,* as a means of spiritual meditation.)

I. i. 1. Dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse; the Sun, its eye; air, its breath; fire, Vaisvanara, its open mouth; the year, the body of the sacrificial horse; heaven, its back; ether, its belly; earth, its hoof; the quarters, its ribs; the seasons, its limbs; months and fortnights, its joints. * * *

I. ii. 1. There was nothing (distinct) here originally, this was wrapped in Death, in hunger; for hunger indeed is death; It created the mind so that it might possess one. It (the Cosmic Being, Hiranyagarbha) went about worshipping itself; out of its own self-esteem, the waters were born; "from my adoration of myself (arch), water (*ka*) has been born; that is the explanation of *arka*." * * * 2. Water is verily this adorable being (*Arka*); the froth

of water solidified into earth; he then exerted himself on earth; from Him who exerted and was in heat, the energy that flowed out became fire (the Cosmic Being, Virat). 3. * * * This life (of all beings) became threefold; the east was his head; the intermediate quarters on either side (northeast and southeast) his arms; the west was his hind part, the intermediate quarters (northwest and southwest) his thighs; the south and north were his sides; heaven his back, the sky his abdomen, this earth the chest; this being is established in the waters . . . . 4. He desired: "Let a second self of mine be born," and he, that Hunger, the Death, consorted with Speech through his mind. The seed that appeared then became the year. * * * 5. * * * With that speech and with the mind, he created all this, whatever there is here, Riks, Yajus, Samans, the metres, the sacrifices, human beings, cattle. Whatever he created, he resolved to devour; as he devours (*ad*) everything, Aditi is so called. * * *

6. He desired that he would sacrifice again with a bigger sacrifice. He exerted, he contemplated intensely and from him who exerted and was in heat thus, fame and strength came out; life-breath (senses) is fame and strength. When these life-breaths (senses) came out of him, his body again began to swell; his mind continued to be in his body. 7. He desired, 'Let this body of mine be fit for sacrifice; let me become embodied.' Thereupon he became a horse (*Asva*); since he swelled (*asvat*) and became fit for sacrifice (*medhya*), the *Asvamedha* (horse-sacrifice) is so called. * * * He who blazes (the Sun) is verily the Asvamedha; the year is his body; this fire is its sacrificial fire; these worlds are its limbs; these two, the sacrificial fire and the Asvamedha sacrifice (fire and Sun) are again only one Deity, Death.

I. iii. The descendants of Prajapati (the Creator)

were of two classes, the gods and the demons;[1] of the two, the gods were less and the demons were more; they contended mutually in the worlds; the gods said: "Well, we shall overcome the demons in the sacrifice with *Udgitha.*"

(This section, called Udgitha Brahmana, describes the meditation with *OM* and its greatness through a narrative, occurring also in the Chandogya Upanishad, Ch. 1. The section closes with a *japa* or meditative recital pertaining to *Prana* (life) at the time when one of the Saman singers, the *Prastotr,* begins one of the Pavamana Samans; the *japa* is called *Abhyaroha* as it helps one that recites it to ascend to one's own divine Self, as Sankara says in his commentary here. The following is the *japa* the three *mantras* (Yajus) of which have become greatly popular in modern times and are widely cited as mottos or recited as prayers.)

From the unreal lead me to Reality; from darkness lead me to Light; from death lead me to Immortality.[2] * * *

I. iv. 1-3. In the beginning there was this Self in the form of a person (the Prime Creator); he looked around but saw nothing besides himself. At first he said, "I am"; thence came the name "I" (*Aham*); hence, even now, when one is called, he first responds with "Here am I" (*Aham*) and then only says his other name; and because he was earlier (*purva*) to all this (creation) and burnt (*ush*) all evils, he is called *Purusha.* * * * He was afraid; hence one who is alone is afraid; he reflected, "When there is nothing besides me, why am I afraid?" Thereupon his fear vanished. Why should he have feared? It is from the presence of a second that fear arises. He was

[1] According to Sankara it is the faculties, speech, etc., that are the gods and demons; in their shining spiritual phase, they are gods (*deva*) and in their decadent material phase demons (*asura*).

[2] *Asato ma sat gamaya; Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya; Mrityor ma amritam gamaya.*

not happy; hence the lonely man is not happy; he desired a second; he was as much in size as a man and woman locked in embrace; he sundered (*pat*) in twain this self of his; thence arose the husband and the wife (*Pati-patni*); Yajnavalkya had observed: "We two are each like half of a split pea." Hence this void is indeed filled by the woman; he embraced her; men were born therefrom. * * *

(The creation of the animal world is then described.)

5. He knew, "I am the creation; I created all this."*** 6. When they say with respect to each god, "Propitiate this god with a sacrifice, propitiate that god with a sacrifice," that god is only His manifestation; He is all the gods. * * * 7. At that time this was undefined; He defined it by name and form,—"this is named so, this is of this form." * * * He entered here to the very tip of his nails, even as a razor in its case or fire in its place. Him they do not see, for He is not complete; breathing, He becomes breath; speaking, speech; seeing, eye; hearing, ear; thinking, mind; these are His names and actions; He who worships one or the other of these does not know; for this is not complete, for He becomes one or the other (according to the act); but one should worship Him as Self, for there all these become one; the Self is the path of all this, for by it one realizes all this. * * * 8. This is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than anything else; closer than everything, namely, the Self. * * * One must worship the Self alone as dear. Whoever worships the Self alone as dear will find that nothing perishable will be dear to him. * * *

10. At the beginning was the Brahman; it knew itself, as "I am the Brahman"; therefore it became everything. Whoever among the gods understood this, became that Brahman; even so among the seers, and among the men. The seer Vamadeva saw this and claimed: "I was Manu,

I was the Sun." So, even now, he that knows thus, "*I am the Brahman*,"[1] becomes all this; even the gods are not powerful enough to undo him; for he becomes their Self. * * *

11-13.

(The creation of the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras among gods and men is then described; when he found all of them not powerful enough, he created Dharma.)

14. He created above all these, what is still superior, Righteousness; this Dharma is more formidable than royalty; therefore there is nothing greater than Righteousness; hence the weak man hopes to vanquish the strong through Righteousness, as through the King; Righteousness is Truth; for he who speaks truth is said to espouse Righteousness, and he espouses truth; both are thus the same.

II. i. 1-2. There was the proud Gargya Balaki, expert at exposition; he told King Ajatasatru of Kasi: "I shall tell you about the Brahman." Ajatasatru said: "We shall give you a thousand (of cows) for these words. . . ." Gargya said: "That same person is the Sun, it is him that I worship as the Brahman." Ajatasatru said: "Do not talk to me of this; I adore him as the Excelling one, as the head of all beings, as King." * * *

3-13.

(Thus Gargya went on mentioning several other objects he was adoring as Brahman,—Moon, Lightning, Ether, Air, Fire, Water, etc., going up to Intellect. But Ajatasatru did not approve of any of these.)

14-20. . . . Ajatasatru took Gargya by the hand; they came to a sleeping man; him Ajatasatru called by name; "O mighty one, in white dress, Soma, King!" He did not get up; he awoke him by squeezing his hand; he arose. Ajatasatru asked: "When this man was asleep, this per-

[1] This is the *Maha-vakya*, Great Affirmation, *Aham Brahma asmi*, of the Yajurveda.

son in the form of intelligence, where had he gone? From where did he come back now?" Gargya knew this not. Ajatasatru: "When he in the form of intelligence was asleep, he gathered the knowledge of the senses through their faculties and slept in the ether that is within the heart; when he draws (into himself) all those faculties, then the person sleeps; then the sense of smell is withdrawn, speech is withdrawn, the eye is withdrawn, the ear is withdrawn, the mind is withdrawn. When he moves about in dream, all those worlds are his, he becomes a mighty king or an eminent Brahman or rises high and falls low; just as a great king, collecting his forces, moves about in his country as he pleases, even so this person gathers the senses and moves about as he pleases in his body. But when he is in deep sleep, he is not aware of anything; there are seventy-two thousand veins which issue from the heart all over the body; returning through them he stays in the body; just as a boy, a great king, or an eminent Brahman, having attained exceeding happiness, lies down, even so he sleeps. Just as a spider would move about with the web thrown out by itself, just as small sparks proceed from the fire, even so from this Self, all faculties, all worlds, all gods, and all beings issue. This is the secret description of it that takes one to it; the Truth of the Truth; the faculties are the truth; of them, he is the Truth.

II. iii. 1. Two are the phases of the Brahman, that with form and that without form, the mortal and the immortal, the limited fixed to a place and the unlimited which is not fixed to a place, the existing and the other. * * *

6. Of this person, the appearance in one form or another is like a cloth dyed in turmeric . . . . Now the indication of this person (Brahman) is "*Not this, Not this*," for beyond saying "Not this, not this," there is nothing else possible. Then as to the name of the Brahman: it is

the '*Truth beyond the Truth*'; the faculties are the truth; of them this is the truth.

II. iv. 1-3. "Maitreyi," said Yajnavalkya, "look here, I am going away from this station (of a householder to that of a recluse); I would like to settle matters (of property) between you and this Katyayani." Maitreyi asked: "Worshipful Lord! if this whole world were filled with wealth for me, would I become immortal thereby?" "No," said Yajnavalkya, "just as the life of those that command ample resources, even so would your life be; but of immortality, there is no hope through wealth." Maitreyi said: "What shall I do with that which would not help me to become immortal? What, my lord, you know (of the means to immortality), tell me that only."

4. Yajnavalkya replied: "Ah, my devoted wife, you are indeed dear to me; you speak what is dear; come, sit down, I shall explain to you; and as I do so, try to grasp it."

5. Yajnavalkya said: "It is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear to the wife, but it is for the sake of one's Self that the husband is dear. It is not for the sake of the wife that the wife is dear to the husband, but it is for the sake of one's Self that the wife is dear. It is not as if the sons are dear to one for the pleasure of the sons, but it is for the pleasure of one's Self that sons are dear.

(The statement is then repeated with reference to wealth, the Brahman, the Kshatriya, the worlds, the gods and the living beings.)

"It is not as if all things are dear to one for their pleasure, but it is for the pleasure of one's Self that all things are dear. Look, it is the Self that is to be seen, heard about, thought about, and contemplated upon.[1]

[1] The three stages of spiritual quest according to Hinduism, *Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana,* hearing about the Truth, reinforcing it with reasoning and making it part of one's experience (***anubhava***).

Maitreyi, by seeing the Self, hearing about it, thinking about it, and understanding it, all this becomes known.

6. "He who thinks the Brahman is different from the Self is repudiated by the Brahman; he who thinks the Kshatriya is different from the Self is repudiated by the Kshatriya; the worlds repudiate him who thinks the worlds are different from the Self; the gods repudiate him who thinks the gods are different from the Self; the living beings repudiate him who sees them as different from the Self; all things repudiate him who thinks all things are different from the Self; this Brahman, this Kshatriya, these worlds, these gods, these living beings, all that is, constitutes the Self. * * *

10. " . . . Behold, It is the breath of this great Being, —this Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, Ithihasa, Purana, the secret exercises, the secret doctrines, the verses, the aphorisms, the exegetical and recommendatory texts, all these are the breath of this Being only.[1] * * *

12. "Just as a lump of salt thrown into water would dissolve in water and there can be none to extract it, and whenever one takes the water, it would still only be salt, even so this great Being, without horizon, without end, is only one mass of knowledge. * * *

14. "Where there is, as it were, duality, there one smells another, sees another, hears another, speaks to another, thinks of another, knows another, but where, to one, everything is but the Self, there what shall he smell and with whose aid? What shall he see and with whose aid? What shall he hear and with whose aid? Whom shall he address and with whose aid? What shall he think and with whose aid? What shall he know and with whose aid? That by which he knows all this, where-

[1] This gives the key to understand the spiritual orientation of Indian æsthetics, of all literary and artistic pursuit in India.

by shall he know it? By what can this knower be known? * * *

15. "This Self is the lord of all beings, the king of all beings; just as at the hub and the rim of the chariot wheel all the spokes are fitted, even so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all lives, all selves abide in this Self." * * *

III. i. 1-2. Janaka, King of Videhas, performed a sacrifice with profuse gifts.[1] There, Brahmans from the Kurus and Panchalas had gathered; Janaka of the Videhas desired to know who among those Brahmans was most learned; he penned a thousand cows, and ten pieces of gold were tied to the horns of each cow. He told them: "O Venerable Brahmans! Let him among you who knows best the Brahman drive away these cows (to his home)." The Brahmans did not dare. Then Yajnavalkya told his pupil, "My dear, drive these cows (to our home)." The pupil addressed Yajnavalkya: "O you renowned for knowledge of the Saman!" and drove the cows home. The other Brahmans grew angry (asking), "How could he (Yajnavalkya) call himself the foremost adept of the Brahman amongst us?" Thereupon, there was Asvala, the Hotr-priest of Janaka Vaideha, he asked: "Yajnavalkya, you are the foremost adept of the Brahman amongst us?" Yajnavalkya replied: "Our respects to the adept of the Brahman! We desire only cows!" Then the Hotr-priest Asvala undertook to question Yajnavalkya.

3. He said: "Yajnavalkya, when all this is encompassed by Death, caught up in death, by what does the sacrifice escape being caught by death?" *Yajnavalkya*: "By speech which is the Hotr-priest and fire; speech is the Hotr-priest of the sacrifices; it is the Hotr-priest; it is the release, total release."

[1] Asvamedha or some other sacrifice called ***Bahu-dakshina***.

4-6.

(Then the Adhvaryu-priest, the eye and the Sun, the Udgatr-priest, the life-breath and air, and the Brahman-priest, the mind and moon, are mentioned as the release and total release; the first two releases from day and night and the bright and dark fortnights, and the last is the means of ascending to heaven. The release is, as Sankara explains, from death of the form of time and act (*Mrityoh ... kala-lakshanat, karma-lakshanat cha.*)

7-8.

(Asvala then puts a series of questions on the sacrifice and Yajnavalkya answers pointing out the inner significances of certain aspects of the sacrifice.)

III. ii. 1-9.

(The question of Jaratkarava Artabhaga and Yajnavalkya's answers in respect of the faculties and their objects which are called *Grahas* and *Atigrahas*, because they afford the catch by which Death (*Mrityu*) seizes man.)

10. "Yajnavalkya," said Jaratkarava, "while all this is food for Death, what is the Deity for whom Death is food?" *Yajnavalkya*: "(There is a death for Death; for) Agni (fire) is death; it, (in turn) becomes food for water; thus does one conquer death." * * *

13. "Yajnavalkya," said Artabhaga, "when a dead man's speech goes into fire, breath into wind, eye into the Sun, mind into the moon, ear into the quarters, body to the earth, the Self to the ether (of the heart), hair of the body to the herbs, hair of the head to the trees, and blood and seed are deposited in water, where at that time is the person?" *Yajnavalkya*: "My dear Artabhaga, give me your hand, we two alone shall know this; this (question) of yours shall not be in public." The two went out and conversed privately. What they said was Action.[1] What they praised was "Action." By good acts, one becomes good, by bad acts, bad. Then Jaratkarava Artabhaga became silent. * * *

[1] The person is led to rebirth by his good and bad acts.

III. iv. *Ushasta Chakrayana* to *Yajnavalkya*: "....That Brahman which is immediate and directly perceptible, the Self which is at the heart of everything, —explain that to me." *Yajnavalkya*: "This your Self is the innermost core of everything." *Ushasta Chakrayana*: "What is it, Yajnavalkya, the innermost core of everything?" *Yajnavalkya*: "You cannot see the seer of the eye itself; you cannot hear the hearer of the ear itself; you cannot think of the thinker of the mind; you cannot know the knower of knowledge; this is your Self; at the heart of everything; everything besides this is subject to suffering." Thereupon, Ushasta Chakrayana fell silent." * * *

III. v. Then Kahola Kaushitakeya asked: "Yajnavalkya, explain to me that Self which is innermost of all, which one sees as the immediate and direct Brahman." Yajnavalkya said: "This your Self is within everything." "What is that Self, Yajnavalkya, which is within everything?" "That which transcends hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death, knowing that Self, the Brahmans rise above the desire for progeny, wealth and the world's goods and live the mendicant life. The desire for progeny is the desire for wealth; the desire for wealth is the desire for the worlds; both are cravings. Therefore, a Brahman should, completing his learning, take his stand on the strength of his knowledge;[1] transcending both strength and learning, he should then be a silent meditator; transcending both non-meditation and meditation, he should be a Brahmana (one of the Brahman)." *Kahola*: "What will that Brahmana be doing?" *Yajnavalkya*: "Whatever he may do, he will be a Brahmana only; anything other than that is miserable." Thereupon Kahola Kaushitakeya became silent.

[1] Also taken by some to mean that he should, freeing himself from the desire for any more learning, remain like a child.

III. vi. Gargi Vachaknavi asked, "Yajnavalkya, all is woven, warp and woof, in water; in what is water woven?" *Yajnavalkya*: "In air, Gargi." "In what is air woven?" "In the heavenly worlds, Gargi." "... the heavenly worlds?" "In the worlds of the Gandharvas, Gargi." "... the worlds of the Gandharvas?" "In the world of the Sun, Gargi." "... the world of the Sun?" "In the worlds of the moon." "... the worlds of the moon?" "In the worlds of the stars." "... the worlds of the stars?" "In the worlds of the gods." "... the worlds of gods?" "In the worlds of Indra." "... the worlds of Indra?" "In the worlds of Prajapati (Creator)." "... the worlds of Prajapati?" "In the worlds of Brahma Hiranyagarbha (Primordial Egg)." "In what are the worlds of Brahma woven warp and woof?" Yajnavalkya said: "Gargi, do not ask too much; your head will fall; you are asking too much of a Deity who is not to be asked about too much; Gargi, do not ask too much." Thereupon, Gargi Vachaknavi became silent.

III. vii.

(Uddalaka Aruni asked about the inner thread (*sutra*) that holds and controls (*antaryamin*) everything, and Yajnavalkya replied:)

3. "That which stands on earth, which is inside earth, which earth knows not, of which the earth is the body, and which controls earth from inside, that is your Self, the inner Controller, the Immortal.

4. "That which is in water ... and which controls water from inside, that is your self, the inner Controller, the Immortal."

5-22.

(The Self is similarly stated to be the immortal inner Controller of fire, ether, air, heaven, Sun, quarters, moon and stars, sky, darkness, light, all beings, life-breath, speech, eye, ear, mind, skin, knowledge and seed.)

23. "... that is your Self, the inner Controller, the

Immortal; unseen but seeing, unheard of but hearing, unthought of but thinking, unknown but knowing; other than that there is nothing that is seer, hearer, thinker and knower. This is your Self, the inner Controller; everything besides it is afflicted." Then Uddalaka Aruni fell silent.

III. viii. 1. Then Vachaknavi said: "Reverend Brahmans! I shall ask this Yajnavalkya two questions and if he answers them, then none indeed among you can vanquish him in a discussion about Brahman." They replied, "Ask, Gargi." * * * 6. She said: "Yajnavalkya, what is it that they say is above the heavens and below the earth, and in between these heaven and earth, and is itself the past, the present and future? And in what is all this woven, warp and woof?" 7. Yajnavalkya replied: "Gargi, what they say is above heaven and below earth, and indeed in between those two and is itself the past, present and future, is the ether; it is in ether that it is woven warp and woof." "In what is the ether woven, warp and woof?"

8. He said: "Gargi, that is what the Brahmans call *Akshara*, the Imperishable; not great, not small; not short, not long; neither glowing red nor moist, without shadow or darkness, neither air nor ether, not sticking, devoid of taste and smell, bereft of eye and ear, speech and mind, heat and breath, with neither entrance nor measurement, with neither an inside nor an outside, neither eating anything nor being eaten.

9. "Gargi, in the reign of this Imperishable do the Sun and the Moon stand, held fast to their duty; earth and heaven stand held fast in their places; the moments, hours, days and nights, fortnights and months, seasons and years, stand firm in their courses; some rivers flow east from the snowy mountains and others west or in other directions; at its command, O Gargi, men praise the giver, the gods the sacrifice, and the manes look to

the offerings.

10. "Gargi, he who without knowing this Imperishable, pours oblations, sacrifices, practises penance for many thousands of years, finds that all that comes to an end; he who, O Gargi, without knowing this Imperishable, departs from this world, is miserable; he who departs after knowing this, is a Brahmana. 11. This Imperishable, O Gargi, is the unseen seer, the unheard listener, the thinker unthought of and the unknown knower." * * *

III. ix. 1. Then Vidagdha Sakalya asked: "Yajnavalkya, how many are the gods?" Yajnavalkya replied, "... three, three hundred, three and three thousand." Sakalya said, "Well, how many are they really?" "Thirty-three." "Well, how many really?" "Six." "Well, how many really?" "Three." "Well, how many really?" "Two." "Well, how many really?" "One and a half." "Well, how many really?" "One." * * *

9. ... "Which is that one god?" "Life; they call it Brahman." "He whose abode is earth, sight, fire, light, mind,—he who knows that person, the ultimate abode of all Selves, he indeed is the knower, Yajnavalkya!" "I know that person, the ultimate abode of every Self, whom you mention; this Self, in the body is that person; now tell me, Sakalya, what is its Deity." Sakalya said, "Immortality." * * *

28. ... *Knowledge and bliss is that Brahman,* the final goal of him who gives away wealth as well of him who knows it and remains quiet.

IV. i. 1-2. Janaka of the Videhas was holding court; Yajnavalkya approached; Janaka addressed him: "Yajnavalkya, why have you come? Desiring cows or subtle arguments?" "Both, my lord," said Yajnavalkya; "let us hear what anyone has told you." *Janaka*: "Jitvan Sailini told me, 'Speech is Brahman.' Just as one duly disciplined under his mother, father or teacher, might

tell, so did Sailini tell me, 'Speech is Brahman.' What will the dumb have here?"

Yajnavalkya: "Did he explain to you the abode and final rest of speech?" "He did not." "King, it is but single-footed."[1] "You then explain it to me, Yajnavalkya." "The mouth is the abode and the ether the rest; it should be worshipped as intellect." "What is the nature of the intellect, Yajnavalkya?" "Speech is sovereign by itself, King, through speech you recognise one as a friendly person; Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, history, myth, secret exercises, oblation, food, drink, this and the next world, all beings,—all these are imparted through speech, O King. Speech is sovereign, it is the Supreme Brahman[2]..." Janaka said: "I give a herd of a thousand cows with a bull of the size of an elephant." Yajnavalkya said: "My father held the view that one should not take anything without teaching in full in return."

3-7.

(Janaka then says in identical terms that Udanka Saulbayana taught him that *Prana* (Life) was the Brahman; that Barku Varshna taught him that eye was the Brahman; that Gardabhivipita Bharadvaja taught him that ear was the Brahman; that Satyakama Jabala taught him that the mind was the Brahman; and that Vidagdha Sakalya taught him that heart was the Brahman.)

IV. ii. 1-3. Janaka got up from his seat and said: "Obeisance to you, Yajnavalkya, teach me." *Yajnavalkya*: "...On departure from this world, do you know whither you will go?" "Venerable Sire! I do not know whither I shall go." "I shall tell you whither you will go.... *Indha* (the glowing one) is the name given to the person (*Purusha*) seen in the right eye; it is this person known as *Indha* which is called Indra (the god) indirect-

[1] That is, it is only a fraction of the Brahman, not the whole of it.

[2] *Cf.* the grammarian-philosopher Bhartrhari who holds that there is no knowledge which is not verbal.

ly.... That in the left eye with the form of a person is his consort, the *Virat* (food, object). They unite in the ether inside the heart. The blood-essence inside the heart is their food; the network of veins within the heart is their covering; they pass along the artery ascending from the heart; like hair split into a thousand strips, its veins, known as *Hitas,* are fixed in the interior of the heart; by them, food travels; thereby this inner self (*Taijasa*)[1] appears to receive food in a more easily assimilated form than the other, the corporeal self (*Vaisvanara*)."[2]

4.

(...Beyond the state of *Taijasa,* the self reaches the third stage of *Prajna,*[3] and then the fourth state;[4] of the Self in this fourth state, the Upanishad now says the following:)

"This Self is characterised as '*Not this, not this*'; intangible, it is not to be grasped; indestructible, it is not destroyed; not adhesive, it does not adhere; it feels no pain, suffers no injury; Janaka, (in it) you have attained freedom from fear." So said Yajnavalkya. * * *

IV. iii. 2-7. *Janaka*: "Yajnavalkya, what is the light of man?" "King, the Sun is his light." "Yajnavalkya, when the Sun has set, what is the light of this Man?" "The moon indeed becomes his light."... "Yajnavalkya, when the Sun has set and also the moon, what is the light of this man?" "Fire is the light."... "When fire is quenched, what is the light of this man?" "His own Self becomes his light." "What is the Self?" "That which is of the form of knowledge among the senses, the light within the heart, the all-embracing person, who, identifying himself with the intellect, moves about both the worlds of

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[1], [2], [3] and [4] Taijasa is the luminous phase, the second, which received the impressions; Vaisvanara is the first, the physical being; the third, the *Prajna,* is the intelligent self which is of the form of knowledge; beyond is the fourth state of pure consciousness, the Self beyond all duality of subject and object, the peaceful, the happy, the one without a second (*Santam, Sivam, Advaitam*). These four states are described fully in the Mandukya Upanishad; see above.

sleep and waking, and appears to remain in contemplation or constant movement; falling asleep, he transcends this world and all forms of death, *i.e.*, mundane activities. * * * 9. ... In that state (of sleep) the person is self-illumined.* * * 21. That state of deep sleep is the form of Self in which there is no desire, no taint of virtue and of vice, no fear; just as one, embraced by his beloved one, is oblivious to anything, outside or inside, even so this person in the embrace of the Self[1] in the state of the Self called the *Prajna* (the one of intelligence) is unconscious of anything, outside or inside; that is his form in which all desires have been realised, in which the Self alone constitutes the desire, in which there is no desire or sorrow.* * * 23. If he does not see (in that state), it is by continuing to see that he does not; there is no loss of sight for the seer, as it is imperishable; there is no second which he can see apart from himself* * * 32. ... It is but by the particles of the bliss of this Self that other beings live.* * *

IV. iv. 2-4. ... "When he departs, life, following him, departs also; and following life, all senses depart; he is conscious and with consciousness does he pass over. He is followed by his knowledge and acts and by the impressions of previous experience. Just as a caterpillar, having reached the end of one blade of grass, taking hold of another support, draws itself to it, even so this Self, after ridding himself of this body and rendering it insentient, takes hold of another resort and draws itself to it. Just as a goldsmith, taking a lump of gold, creates another newer and even more beautiful form, even so this Self, rid of this body and rendering it insentient assumes another newer and fairer form,—of the Pitrs, Gandharvas, gods, Prajapati, Brahma or other Beings." * * *

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[1] *Cf.* the latter symbolism of love used to illustrate the relation of the Supreme Soul and the individual soul, God and the devotee.

[In the end are given a number of metrical *mantras* on the Self in its state of release (*Moksha*).]

21. "Knowing only that Self, the Brahmana should engage himself in its enquiry; he should not think of many words; for it is sheer weariness of speech."

22. "This is verily the great unborn Self in the form of knowledge, among the senses, that which reposes in the inner ether of the heart, controller of everything, ruler of everything, master of everything; it does not become superior by a good act nor inferior by a bad one; the master of all beings, the protector of all; it (the Self) is the dam that keeps the world from chaos and it is what the Brahmans desire to know by learning the Vedas, by sacrifice, gifts, penance and fasting; and knowing it, become silent meditators; desiring its world recluses renounce this world.... neither what one has done nor what one has left undone affect one who has realised it."

23. ... Thus spoke Yajnavalkya. Janaka replied, "To your venerable self, I bestow the whole Videha country, together with myself, for your service." * * *

V. ii. 1-3. The three offspring of Prajapati, gods, men and demons, underwent training under their father, Prajapati. Completing their studentship, the gods said: "Impart, O Blessed One, your teaching." Prajapati told them this syllable "*DA*" and asked, "Did you understand?" They said, "We have understood; you said to us, *Subdue your senses*." "Yes, you have understood." Then the men asked him to give them his message; to them he spoke the syllable "*DA*"; and asked if they had understood. They said, "We have understood; you said to us, *Give*." "Well, you have understood." Then the demons asked him to give them his message; he spoke to them the syllable "*DA*" and asked them if they had understood. They said, "We have understood, you have said to us, *Be compassionate*." "Well, you have understood." This is what this heavenly voice, the

thunder, goes on saying, "*DA-DA-DA*,"—"*Be subdued, Give, Be compassionate.*"[1] Therefore one should cultivate this triad, Self-Control, Giving and Compassion.[2]

SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD

(Of the Krishna Yajurveda, Taittiriya; known also as a Mantropanishad, after its occurrence within the Samhita. With its Samkhya concepts, theism, identification of the Supreme as Siva, mention of the concepts of Sakti and Maya, this Upanishad is significant from several points of view.)

I. 1-3. Those that speak of the Brahman say: "What is the Prime Cause? Brahman? Wherefrom are we born? Whereby do we live? Where do we rest in the end? O, Knowers of the Brahman! Presided over by whom do we abide by a condition, in pleasure or its opposite? Whether Time, the Nature of things, Necessity, Chance, the Elements or the Sentient Spirit is the cause, is to be considered; the union of these is not the cause, for there is the sentient self, (and these are not sentient); and the sentient Self (of the individual) is also not independent, for it is subject to pleasure and pain. Pursuing concentrated meditation, they saw the power (*Sakti*) belonging to God Himself, hidden in God's own qualities, God being the One who presides over all those causes from Time to the individual Self.* * * 6. In this infinite wheel of the Supreme Being, in which everything lives and has its being, the swan (of the individual Self) is being tossed, imagining itself and the promulgator as different; if it is blessed by the Lord, it then attains immortality. 7. This has been sung of as the Supreme Brahman; in it is the triad (the Supreme Self, the individual Self and the World), but it is the imperishable and firm substratum (of all); the knowers of the Brahman, seeing the distinc-

[1] On this is based "*What the Thunder Said*" in Section 5 of T. S. Eliot's "*The Waste Land.*"

[2] Here, as well as above, portions are omitted as corresponding passages occur in the Upanishads translated earlier.

tion in this triad, devote themselves to the Supreme Brahman, merge in it and are liberated from birth. 8. The perishable and imperishable, manifest and unmanifest, which are united, are all of them sustained by the Lord; the individual self which is not the master becomes bound by being the enjoyer; but on knowing the Lord, it becomes released from all bonds. 9. The two unborn selves (the Supreme and the individual), the knowing and the unknowing, and the independent and the dependent; the one unborn power (*Sakti*) of the Lord responsible for the condition of the enjoyer and the enjoyed objects; the unbounded Supreme Self (apart) which is of the form of all and is really not the doer,—when one knows these three, that is Brahman. 10. The perishable (*kshara*) is primordial matter; the immortal imperishable (*akshara*) is Siva, the sole god who controls matter and the individual spirit; by contemplating upon Him, by fixing one's self on Him and becoming one with Him, there is at the death of the body cessation of further illusion of the universe. 11. By knowing the Lord, all bonds are destroyed; when afflictions disappear, birth and death are at an end; by contemplating Him, on the decay of the body, there follows the third state of universal lordship, unaffected by a second, in which all desires have been fulfilled.* * *

15. Like oil in sesamum, like ghee in curds, like water in river-springs, like fire in wood, the Self is realised within oneself by him who perceives it through truth and penance.* * *

II. [1] * * * 8. Keeping the body erect and straight at the three centres (chest, neck and head), directing with his mind the senses into the heart the initiate should cross all threatening floods by means of the bark of Brahman (OM). 9. Restraining the breath, and regulating the activities, one should, when the breath has been held,

[1] 1-7 are prayers to the Sun.

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release it slowly through the nose; like a vehicle yoked with turbulent horses, the knowing man should, with vigilance, hold the mind in control. 10-14. One should engage himself in concentration at a place which is even, pure, free from pebbles, fire and sand, pleasing to the mind with its sounds, water and resting places, undisturbing to the eye, in a cave sheltered from wind.* * * Just as an image, covered up by mud, shines forth brightly when cleaned, even so realising the truth of Self, the individual becomes the One Self, with all his objects fulfilled and freed of sorrow. 15. When, with his own real self, as with a lamp, he sees in concentration the truth of the Brahman, he understands the Lord unborn and stable, cleared of all other principles, and becomes free from all bonds. 16. The Lord was born before all the worlds; He is also within the womb (as Prime Creator). He is the born and yet to be born; He stands at the heart of all beings, facing all sides. 17. Obeisance to the God who is in fire and water, who has entered the whole world. Obeisance to the God who is in herbs and trees.

III. 1. The sole Lord, who, net in hand, rules with his powers, He who controls the whole world with his powers, and who alone exists during creation and sustenance, they who know this become immortal.[1] * * * 7. Knowing the great Truth which is beyond the world and the individual Self and the primary creator, the Lord of Lords, who has encircled the universe, they become immortal.* * * 9. Beyond whom there is nothing higher and subtler or greater, except whom nothing exists, who is rooted in the heaven like a firmly planted tree, by that Being is all this universe filled. 10. What is farther, beyond the world, is devoid of form, and is the perfect well-being; those who know this become immortal; but

[1] Then follow some verses elaborating this same idea and embodying prayers to that Supreme Being as Rudra, some of which have already been rendered under the *Samhita* section.

others suffer. 11. With infinite faces, heads and necks, hidden within the cave of every heart, pervading everything is that Lord; He is therefore omnipresent and auspicious. 12. This Being is the Lord Almighty; He is the stimulator of the mind; He is the master of this pure Power that pervades everything; He is the unquenchable light.[1] * * * 17. Himself devoid of all senses, but infusing to all senses their quality and light, the Lord and Master of all, the great refuge of all. 18. The Being within this city of nine gates (the body), the swan, roams out, master of all the world, moving and static. 19. Fleet and grasping without feet or hands, He sees without eyes, and hears without ears; He knows the object to be known, but there is none who knows Him; Him they call the Great Being. * * *

IV. 1. The one colourless Being, who through manifold association of His own Power (*Sakti*), assumes many colours, without any self-interest, into whom, the source, everything comes at the end,—may this God unite us with an auspicious mind. 2. That is Fire, Sun, Wind, Moon, the Seed, the Cosmic Being, the Waters and the Creator. 3. You are man or woman, boy or girl; you are old and go about tottering with a stick; you are born under many shapes. * * * 5. The one unborn (Primordial matter), red, white and black[2] and breeding beings of the same (threefold) form in large numbers, the other Unborn (the Spirit) consorts in love, and having enjoyed, abandons his spouse.[3] 6. Two birds (*Prakriti* and *Purusha*), united as friends, are perched on the same tree; of them one devours the sweet fruit; the other simply looks on without eating. 7. Abiding in the same tree along with Nature

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[1] Then follow a few verses in celebration of this and occurring in the *Purusha Sukta,* already rendered.

[2] Refers to the three *Gunas—Rajas, Sattva* and *Tamas* which continue in the make-up of all the evolutes.

[3] The *Purusha* undergoes experiences (*Bhoga*) through *Prakriti* and eventually abandons her (*i.e.*, becomes *Kevala*).

(*Prakriti*) which is not master of itself, the individual spirit (*Purusha*) becomes deluded and grieves; but when he sees the other (the Supreme Spirit) in happiness and Lordship, and realises its greatness, he becomes free from sorrow. 8. That Imperishable Truth of the hymns, the vast ether-like Brahman in which the gods themselves sit, what shall he who knows that Being do with the hymn? Those that know Him are sitting quietly here. 9. The Vedas, offerings, sacrifices, vows, past, future and whatever the Vedas speak of, and our selves and this world,—all these the possessor of Mystic Power (*Maya*) creates; it is in Him that the individual soul is bound through His samé Mystic Power. 10. The Mystic Power (*Maya*), it should be known, is primordial Nature; and the master thereof (*Mayin*), the Great Lord; and by His parts is all this Universe pervaded. 11. The one who presides over every cause, in whom all this appears and disappears, knowing for certain that Lord, the granter of boons, the adorable God, one attains the ultimate peace.

12. He who is the origin and cause of the gods, the omniscient Rudra, greater than the universe, who saw the Prime Creator himself taking form,—may He unite us with an auspicious mind. * * *

14. Subtler than the subtle, the creator at the centre of this impervious material universe, of manifold forms, the one encompassing everything, by realising that auspicious Lord, the soul attains absolute peace.

15. He who saves the world in time, the Lord of the universe hidden in all beings, on whom the divine sages and the gods have concentrated their thoughts,—knowing Him thus one cuts asunder the bonds of death. * * *

18. When darkness has ceased and day and night are no more, nor existence and non-existence, and Siva reigns supreme, that is Imperishable, the adorable (effulgence of the) Sun, wherefrom the hoary wisdom too has been handed down. * * *

V. 1. In the unbounded Imperishable Being beyond the creator, the pair, knowledge and ignorance, are mysteriously laid together. Ignorance is perishable; knowledge is immortal; He who controls both knowledge and ignorance is a different Person.* * *

10. It is neither male nor female nor even neuter; whatever body it takes, by that is it shielded.* * *

VI. 1. Some deluded sages speak of the Nature of things as the cause, and others, similarly of Time as the cause; but this, in this world, is the greatness of the Lord by which the wheel of the creator is being revolved.

2. It is at the instance of Him by whom all this is always pervaded, the sentient one who is the author of Time, who has recourse to the three qualities (for creation) and is omniscient,—it is at His instance, one should know, that the act of creation takes the various forms of earth, water, light, wind and ether.* * *

8. There is no body or instrument for Him; there is none seen who equals or excels Him; His power is said to be supreme and manifold, and His knowledge, strength and activity innate. * * * 10. Like a spider in its web, the only God, who by His own nature covered Himself with the extensions caused by primordial nature, may He give us union with the Brahman. 11. The one God hidden in all beings, pervading everything, and the inner soul of all beings, He who supervises all actions, is immanent in all beings and is merely the all-knowing witness, who stands apart unaffected and devoid of qualities (*gunas*). 12. The one Controller of the manifold inert, who multiplies manifoldly the one seed,—the wise who see Him established in their own Self, to them is everlasting happiness, not to others. 13. The eternal among the eternal, the sentient among the sentient, the one who fulfils the wishes of many,—knowing God as the ultimate Cause

who is to be reached by knowledge and discipline, one released from all earthly bonds. * * *

18. That God who first brought forth the Creator, revealed to him the Vedas and makes manifest the knowledge of the Self, in him, I, desiring release, take refuge. * * *

IV. DHARMA SASTRA

I. DHARMA SUTRAS

APASTAMBA DHARMA SUTRA

I. i. TEACHER AND LEARNING

14. The Teacher is called *Acharya* because the student gathers from him the *dharmas*. 15. Never should (a student) think ill of him (the teacher). 16. For the teacher gives him a (new) birth in knowledge. 17. And that is the highest birth. 18. Mother and father engender his body only.

iii. THE STUDENT

17-24; iv. 25, 29. The student must be gentle, subdued, controlled in senses and shrinking from doing wrong, firm in his fortitude, neither lazy, irascible, nor jealous. He must, in private, bring to the teacher's notice any inadvertent or deliberate transgression of the rules of conduct on the teacher's part. To such a disciplined student, all the meritorious sacrificial and household acts bear fruit in his studentship itself.

vii. (After completion of education.)

24. The student must neither indulge in self-praise nor disparage others.

viii. THE TEACHER

25-28. The Teacher must, with the same anxiety as he would display towards a son, impart learning to the pupil, with the utmost attention and without keeping back anything in the *dharmas*. Except under unavoidable circumstances, the Teacher must not so detain the pupil in his own private work as to hinder the pupil's learning.

Divided in his devotion, the student who finds incompetence in his teacher, ceases to be a student. And

the teacher too who fails to impart knowledge ceases to be a teacher.

xiii. THE HOUSEHOLDER

4. The exhilarated one becomes proud; the proud transgresses duty; and by transgression of duty, one goes to hell.

xiv. 2. One must not turn away the student who asks for instruction.

xvii. 21. No intoxicating drink must be drunk.

xx.

1. One must not observe the ordained duties with a worldly end in view. 2. For in the end they bear no fruit. 3. Just as when a mango is planted to bear fruit, shade and fragrance also result concomitantly, even so the ordained duty that is performed is attended by material gains.

5. To the words of the hypocrite, the cheat, the heretic, and the young, one must react neither with hate nor deception.

7. That which, being done, receives the commendation of the noble, is *Dharma*; that which they condemn is *Adharma*.

8. In all realms, one must conform to the rules of conduct receiving the consistent sanction of the noble, the well-disciplined, elders, self-controlled, free from avarice and vanity.

xxii. ADHYATMA PATALA (Spiritual Section)[1]

1. One must have recourse to the appropriate means of spiritual advancement leading to the elimination of mental distraction. 2. There is nothing higher than the realisation of the Self.* * * 11. The eradication of the

[1] This eighth book called *Adhyatma Patala* has also an independent existence among spiritual works and has a commentary reputed to have been written by Sankaracharya himself.

evils that are the root of this life is attained through *Yoga*; eradicating these which burn up as it were the body, the wise man attains welfare.

12. Now we shall enumerate the evils that scorch the bodily elements: 13. Anger, elation, indignation, avarice, delusion, vanity, enmity, speaking falsehood, over-eating, traducing others, jealousy, passion, ill-feeling, lack of self-possession and mental concentration,—these are to be destroyed through *Yoga*.

14. Absence of anger, elation, indignation, avarice, delusion, vanity, and enmity; speaking truth; moderation in eating; refraining from exposing others' weak points; freedom from jealousy; sharing one's good things with others; sacrifice; straightforwardness; gentleness; quietude; self-control; friendliness with all beings; absence of cruelty; contentment,—these form the approved conduct for men in all stations of life; observing them duly, one becomes universally benevolent.

II. iii. 22. Of that which is to be eaten by the householder, offerings to the gods and living beings are to be made; these offerings are productive of salvation as well as nourishment.

II. iv. 10-14. After these offerings, one must feed those to whom priority is due. First to be fed are the guests, boys, aged men, invalids and pregnant women. The husband and wife of the house must not turn away one who comes at eating time and asks for food. If food is not available, place for rest, water for refreshment, grass-mat to repose upon, and pleasing words entertaining the guest,—these at least never fail in the houses of the good.[1]

II. ix. 10-11. They to whom a permanent share is due (such as the servants), to them shares must be

[1] Most characteristic of India, the land of hospitality, the above embodied *verbatim* in a verse, is familiar to all.

given, without imposing any hardship on them. One may submit oneself, one's wife or son to hardship, rather than one's dependent and servant.

12-13. The austerity to which a man puts himself must be such as to keep him fit for work. For the recluse in silence, only eight natural mouthfuls of food (are proper); for those retired to the forests, sixteen natural mouthfuls; and for the householder thirty-two natural mouthfuls;[1] it is only the student for whom no specification of mouthfuls is made.

II. xi. 7. (On the road) the first right of way must be given by all to those dragging loads, the invalid and the women.

12. When his wife is endowed with virtue and children, a man must not marry another.

II. xxi. 1. Four are the stations of life, household life, studentship, life of the silent sage and life in the forest.

10. He who renounces life (*Parivrat*) must dispense with sacrificial rites in fire, with house, enjoyment, and seeking shelter with another; must open his mouth only for recital of sacred texts and *mantras* like *OM,* take from the village only so much as to hold his soul and body together, and free himself from any act having the prospect of gain here or in the hereafter.

II. xxv. ROYAL DUTIES

11. None in the country must by reason of poverty or others' infliction, come to grief through hunger, illness, cold and heat. 15. That ruler is a (real) promoter of welfare in whose realm, neither in village nor in forests, is there fear from thieves.

II. xxvi. 4. In villages and cities he must appoint for the protection of people, men who are high-minded,

[1] In II. i. 3. Apastamba prohibits the husband and wife from eating to satiety.

clean and honest. 5. And their subordinates must also possess the same virtues.

GAUTAMA DHARMA SUTRA

VIII. Atma-Gunas (Personal Qualities)

20-23. Apart from the forty sacraments[1], there are the eight qualities of the soul: Compassion towards all beings, forbearance, absence of jealousy, purity, moderation, auspiciousness, dignified conduct of oneself and freedom from avarice. He who has received all the sacraments and does not have the eight personal qualities, he does not attain the world of Brahma and oneness with him. He who has only a few of the sacraments, but has the eight personal qualities,—he, however, attains to the world of and identity with Brahma.

IX. 2-7. One must bathe every day, and be neat and free from bad odour. Means permitting, one must not wear torn or dirty clothing. One must not wear scarlet, gaudy clothing or that worn by others; nor garlands and shoes worn by others. If too poor for a change, a man must wash his clothes before wearing them. Without reason, one must not grow a beard.

21. Inauspicious matters must be referred to in auspicious words *i.e.*, a bad or shocking piece of news or strong sentiments must be couched in polite language.[2]) 35. A man must protect himself from all dangers. 68. His conduct must be truthful and noble. 70. Always non-violent, gentle but resolute in action, given to habits of self-control and generosity.

XIX. 15-16. The places suitable for expiatory meditation are hills, rivers, holy lakes and waters, hermitages of

[1] Sacraments or *Samskaras* are rites performed at the different stages of one's life, birth, naming, first feeding, first tonsure, initiation into Vedic study, marriage and so on.

[2] King Bhoja (11th Century A.D.), in his work of poetics, calls this the stylistic quality of *Susabdata* (softness of wording).

sages, cow-pens and temple. Continence, speaking truth, ablutions in the morning, noon and evening, remaining in wet clothes,[1] lying on bare ground and fasting are expiatory penances.

Supplement. KRIYAPADA The Daily Routine

I shall next speak of the accepted course of conduct. From observance of accepted conduct, one gains merit, wealth, happiness, and from the same, final liberation. Arising in the last quarter of the night, with a composed mind, casting off sleep, . . . holding evenly the vital and the downgoing breath, calling up the Sun (in one's heart), and in the lotus opened by the Sun, one should rest the swan of one's heart. Seeing there with the inner eye, the divine Being, of a thumb's size, comprehending the higher and the lower Brahman and of the form of light, remaining as much as possible in that state in the dawn and praising the Supreme with manifold hymns.* * *

Sitting without distraction and facing east, one must clean one's teeth with a green twig, cut evenly, with bark and nodes, astringent, bitter or sharp in taste, from a thorn-tree or one of fragrant smell. . . .

Before the actual sunrise, at early dawn, a bath in the sea, confluence of sea and river, lake, reservoir and river . . . destroys the heinous sins[2]. . . . A mental bath is one that is secured by contemplating the all-pervasive Lord of the form of undiminished bliss and knowledge. . . . By reason of exigencies of physical unfitness, and unsuitability of place and time, all these kinds of baths are of equal efficacy. The mental bath is the highest. The *mantra*-bath is prescribed when one is undergoing medical treatment, is ill, and when there is local com-

[1] For purification and as a consequence of continuous observance of various rites.

[2] For the *mantras* relating to the bath, see above the selections from the Rigveda, p. 8, and the Taittiriya Aranyaka, p. 39.

motion by reason of politics, thieves, etc., (preventing one from going out to a place for a bath.) * * *

Where there is no restraint of talk, the ablutions deprive a man of lustre, the fire in which oblations are offered does not produce prosperity, and while eating, death is hastened; therefore one must observe silence in these three acts (bathing, worship and eating) . . . .

. . . When there is a river, one must not bathe in other waters; Gaya, Ganga, Kurukshetra, etc., are the holy places for special sacred baths; therefore one must remember them and thrice immerse himself in the water.[1] One must not splash the water with his feet nor enter water when he is full of dirt; one must not discharge into water blood, excreta, urine, spit, semen, . . .

With a steady mind, east-facing, on a seat, one must after washing his feet and palms, . . . worship Sandhya. Seated, one must practise the control of breath. . . . Without Sandhya-worship, one is always impure and unfit for all further rites . . . . After control of breath and sprinkling of water, one must stand facing the Sun, take water in both palms, sanctify it with the recital of *Gayatri mantra*,[2] and offer it at the morning and evening twilight by throwing it up three times . . . . One must repeat the *Gayatri* in meditation, facing east and up to the actual sight of the Sun in the morning; facing west and up to the rise of the stars in the evening; ten repetitions of *Gayatri* destroy sins of the moment, a hundred, the sins of the day and night, and a thousand, those of a year . . . . After this, one must go home.* * *

Then one must do the daily oblations in fire, . . .

[1] Whatever the water one bathes in, one recites a verse invoking the main sacred rivers of India: "O Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri,—come into the water in which I am bathing."

[2] See above selections from Rigveda, III. 62. 10.

the different propitiations (*yajna*) to sacred lore, gods and manes. . . .[1] Then entering the room where the divine images are kept, and with the materials of worship ready, must sit on a clean seat and worship God. . . . Then one must salute the teachers, elders and those learned in the Vedas. . . . Till noon . . . must attend to Vedic study. . . .[2]

Then, after the midday worship of the Sun, one must eat . . . . The unknown and anonymous fatigued traveller-guest who turns up at the end of the *Vaisvadeva*, is verily a guest that brings the heaven; and of all gifts, gift of food is the highest . . . . The act of eating is similar to the propitiation of fire with oblations.[3]

A man must not sleep or give way to acts of lust during daytime . . . . Till evening, he must engage himself in the study of his school of philosophy.[4] Then one must perform the evening worship of *Sandhya*.

II. SMRITIS

MANU SMRITI

(Among codes of sacred and civil conduct (*Dharma*), Manu's is the foremost; Manu, man's first progenitor, is praised thus in the Veda itself: "Whatever Manu said is medicine." The Manu Smriti has exerted influence in the countries of the Far East too where Indian civilisation travelled.)

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[1] See above the Five Great Daily Sacrifices, p. 44.

[2] Here one also reads (*parayana*) his favourite religious book, the Ramayana or the Bhagavata, both given below, or a book of hymns, samples of which are also given towards the end here.

[3] See above, pp. 49-50, the *mantras* of this act at the end of the Vedic selections.

[4] In the preliminary chapters of Bana's Harshacharita (7th cent. A.D.) the poet gives us in the course of the prefatory autobiography a graphic picture of this daily routine. Bana describes also the reading of the puranas daily, in the afternoon.

II.

1. Know ye the *Dharma* that the learned, who are good and are invariably free from prejudice either way, follow and approve of in their conscience. 6. The whole Veda is the basis of *Dharma*, as also the *Smritis* and the conduct of those that know the Vedas, the conduct of the good and the conscience of the disciplined.[1]

83. The single syllable *OM* is the Supreme Brahman; control of breaths is the supreme penance; there is nothing higher than the *Gayatri*; better than silence is to speak the truth. 87. By mere repetition of a *mantra*, a Brahman attains spiritual success here; there is no doubt about this; he may or may not do other rites; the Brahman is said to be he who is the friend of all. 154. Not by years, not by grey hairs, not by virtue of wealth or kinsmen did the Seers promulgate the *Dharmas*; whoever is fully learned is great in our eyes. 155. Brahmans excel by reason of their knowledge, Kshatriyas by reason of heroism, Vaisyas by reason of trade and wealth and Sudras by reason of their very birth.

159. The teaching to fellow beings of what is beneficial must be done in a non-violent manner; he who desires *Dharma*, should employ his words sweetly and finely.

160. Even when harassed, one must not hit at another's weak spot, nor think or do anything in hate against another; that word of his at which another would shudder, that word which is against heaven, one must not utter.

162. From honours, a Brahman must always shrink as from poison; and humiliation, he must always covet as he would, nectar. He who has been humiliated sleeps happily, wakes up happily, and moves about happily in

[1] India's foremost poet, Kalidasa, puts this last in the mouth of King Dushyanta in his masterpiece Sakuntala (Act I, verse 19).

this world; he who has inflicted humiliation on another perishes.

227-8. The pains that their parents endure in giving birth and in the upbringing of offspring cannot be recompensed even in centuries[1]; to them always and to the teacher also, one must always do what is pleasing; in the satisfaction of these, is all penance completed.

238. The man of faith must accept wholesome teaching even from an inferior, high principles from even the lowliest, and the gem of a lady even from an inferior family.

III.

56. Fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law must honour the bride and deck her in jewels, if they desire welfare; *where women are honoured, there the gods delight*; where they are not honoured, all acts become fruitless. 57. The house where the daughters-in-law sorrow, falls into ruin soon; where they do not grieve, it always prospers. 60. Where the husband is ever satisfied with the wife and the wife with the husband, in that family, welfare is enduring.

77. Just as all living beings depend for their life on air, even so do all stations of life depend on that of the householder.

257. (At the end of the *Sraddha*[2] the householder must ask of the manes:) "May bounteous givers multiply in our families, may our own Vedic studies and progeny increase; let not faith depart from our house; and let us have much to give."[3]

[1] *Cf.* the Mahabharata, XII. 109-10, "*Dharma* has been promulgated for the welfare of beings and the decision is that that is Dharma which conduces to welfare."

[2] A rite in which food and other offerings are made to the manes or the spirits of dead persons.

[3] A further request made at this time is: "May we have ample food; may we get guests; let us have others to beg of us, and let us not beg of anybody."

IV.

12. The householder must, taking his stand on contentment, exercise restraint in his effort to seek happiness; happiness is rooted in contentment; its opposite is the root of misery.

55. One must not pass urine or stools in water-reservoirs or spit or throw therein anything impure, any blood or poison.

94. The Seers (*Rishis*) attained their long life, intellect, fame and spiritual lustre by the length of their *Sandhya*-worship.

129. One must not bathe (fully) after eating, in illness, at dead of night, always with all the clothing on, nor in an unknown reservoir.

134. There is nothing in this world so fatal to longevity as one man's taking to another's wife.

137. One must not run oneself down by reason of earlier failures; till death one must go on seeking fortune; one must not consider it difficult to gain.

138. *One must speak the truth and speak it agreeably; must not speak the truth in an unpleasant manner nor must he speak falsehood because it is pleasing; this is the eternal Dharma.*[1]

139. One must not disparage those of deformed limbs, the uneducated, the old or the ugly, the poor and the lowly.

160. *Whatever is dependent on others is misery; whatever rests on oneself is happiness*; this in brief is the definition of happiness and misery.

161. That act in doing which one has inner satisfaction, that he must do without effort; the opposite, he must avoid.

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[1] One of the axiomatic verses, this is also characteristic of the unique way of Hinduism in respect of the basic principles.

176. Those material and emotional pursuits which are devoid of righteousness, one must abandon; also that act of *Dharma* which has an unhappy end is decried by the public.

178. That by which one's fathers went, that by which one's grandfathers went, that path of the good, one must tread; treading that, one does not incur sin.

179. One must not pick a quarrel with one's priest, teacher, uncle, guest, and dependent; boys, elders, invalids, doctors, agnates, marriage-relations, parents, sister and female relations, brother, son, wife, daughter and the servants.

186. Though one is entitled to receive gifts, one must avoid the occasions for them; for, quickly is one's spiritual effulgence quenched by receiving gifts.

195. He who practises an act of piety in public, he who is always avaricious, he who is observing things under some pretext, he who is deceiving the public, the hypocrite, the injurious, he who deceives all, he who has always a downward look, the severe, the selfish, the rogue, one of pseudo-humility, the impostor,—all these, through their respective sinful acts, fall into the hell of great darkness.

238-40. One must slowly build up Dharma, even as ants the anthill, for help in the other world, and without hurting any being. For help in the other world, neither father nor mother stands, neither wife and children nor kinsmen; *Dharma* alone stands. Singly is a creature born, singly does it disappear; singly it enjoys the fruits of its meritorious acts and singly those of its evil acts.

255. He who describes himself before the good differently from what he (really) is, he is the worst sinner in the world, the thief who hides away his own self.

256. To the word are all things tied; they are based in the word and issue forth therefrom; the man who employs that word like a thief, is a thief of everything.

257-8. Having duly cleared his obligations to the great sages (by learning), to the ancestors (by progeny) and to the Gods (by offerings), one must entrust everything to the son, and live betaking himself to an attitude of detachment. Alone and in seclusion, he must daily think about the good of his soul.

V.

48. Without doing injury to living beings, flesh can be had nowhere; and the killing of living beings is not conducive to heaven; hence eating of flesh must be avoided. 56. There may be no harm in eating flesh, in drinking or in sexual indulgence; creatures are by nature prone to them, but refraining therefrom holds great fruits.

107, 109. The learned get purified by forbearance, the wrongdoers by liberality, the secret sinners by silent repetition of *mantra*, the learned in the Vedas by penance. The limbs are cleansed by water, the mind by truthfulness, the soul by learning and penance, and intellect by knowledge.

150. The housewife must always be joyous, adept at domestic work, keep her domestic wares clean, and be thrifty.

155, 160. A woman has no independent sacrifice to perform, no vow, no fasting; by serving her husband, she wins honour in Heaven.[1] On the death of her husband, the chaste wife, established in continence, reaches heaven, even if childless, like the Brahmacharins who have practised self-control. 165. Controlled in mind, word and body, she who does not transgress against her

[1] The *Pativrata* is the highest ideal of womanhood; in South India, the chaste wife, *Patni*, is a goddess (***Pattini-k-kadavul***).

lord, attains the same heaven as her lord and the good call her the chaste lady (*Sadhvi*).

VI.

2-3. When a householder finds his skin shrinking and hair turning grey, and becomes a grandfather, then he must retire to the forest. Renouncing food cooked of cultivated foodstuffs and all his worldly goods, and either leaving his wife under the care of his sons or taking her along with himself, he must retire to the forest.

8. Daily engaged in study, he must be self-controlled, affectionate, composed, always ready to give but never to take, and compassionate towards all beings. 33. Spending thus the third stage of his life in the forest, in the fourth he must give up all attachments and go forth as a recluse. 39. He who abandons his house, having vowed not to be the cause of fear to any creature, to him accrue worlds of light that belong to the exponents of the Brahman. 40. For that twice-born from whom no creature feels an iota of fear, for him who has detached himself from his body, there is nothing to dread from any quarter. 45. He must be equally indifferent to death and life; like an employee whose appointed task is over, he must just be looking forward to the end of his time. 46. Where his eye sees cleanliness, there he must set his foot; water filtered pure by his cloth, he must drink; and word purified by truth, he must speak and what is pure by conscience he must do. 47-8. He must put up with high-handed criticisms and must insult none in return; while yet in this body, he must not pick quarrels with anybody; he must not return anger for anger; decried, he must reply with a polite word. 61-5. He must reflect on the course of human beings as determined by the evil of their actions,—falling into hell and undergoing tortures in Yama's abode, separation from their dear ones, association with the undesirable ones, succumbing to old age, affliction of maladies, exit from the body,

rebirth in the womb, the wandering of the inner soul of man through crores of wombs, the misery caused to embodied beings through sin; and the attainment of imperishable happiness through virtue; he must also see by concentration the subtle nature of the Supreme Self.

92-3. Contentment, forbearance, self-control, abstention from taking by force, purity, control of senses, intellectual pursuits, spiritual knowledge, truthfulness, freedom from anger,—these ten constitute the definition of *Dharma*.

VII. Royal Duties

44. (The Ruler) must make an effort, day and night, for the conquest of his senses; one of controlled senses becomes capable of controlling the subjects. 47. Hunting, sleeping by day, talking scandal, women, intoxication, music and dance, excursions,—these constitute eight sins born of desire. 48. Exposing others' defects, daring, enmity, jealousy, intolerance, violation of others' possession, severe calumniation, severe punishment,—these constitute the eight flaws resulting from anger. 49. That which the wise know as the root of both these, that avarice, one should conquer; both these sets of flaws are the products of avarice. 50. Drink, gambling, women, game,—these four are the worst of the sins bred by desire.

64. Devoted, free from temptation, capable, endowed with memory, knowing the proper time and place, endowed with personality, fearless, eloquent,—such an envoy of the King is praiseworthy.

90-93. In battle, the King must not destroy his enemies by using snares, nor by fanged, poisoned or inflamed arrows. Remembering the principles followed by the righteous, he must not kill one who has stepped down from the chariot, one who is impotent, has raised his hands in salute, has his hair dishevelled, is sitting quietly

or has surrendered; one who is asleep, unequipped, undressed, unarmed, not engaged in action, not aware of his opponent or engaged with a different foe; one who has lost his weapons, is dejected, severely wounded, scared, and has run away from battle.

99. He must desire to gain what has not been acquired already; what has been acquired, he must conserve; what has been conserved, he must strive to increase and what he has thus amassed, he must bestow on the deserving.

123-4. The servants of the King, charged with the duty of protection, are often rogues, misappropriating others' possessions; from them the King must save his subjects. Corrupt officers who receive bribes from those who come to them for official work, must have their whole property confiscated and be exiled by the King.

198. By conciliatory means, by concessions, by breaking up the alliance among opponents, by adopting these severally or together, the King must strive to overcome his enemies, rather than by open war.

VIII. Administration of Justice

13. One must avoid the court of justice but having entered, must speak properly; by silence or false deposition, one becomes a sinner. 15. Righteousness leads to destruction when it is itself destroyed, and protects when it is safeguarded; therefore it must not be endangered, for the reason that *Dharma* which is harmed may not ruin us. 18. A fourth of *Dharma* goes to the judge, a fourth to the witness, a fourth to the jury, and a fourth to the Ruler. 81. By truthfulness, the witness gains the ample realms of Brahma, and fairest name here; for the honest witness is a voice honoured by God Brahma Himself. 84. One's soul is one's witness, and his final resort; therefore, disregard not your own inner self which is the highest witness of man. 85. Sinners

imagine that none sees them; but them the Gods watch closely, as also the inner being in oneself. 86. Heaven, earth, water, heart, moon, sun, fire, wind, night, the two twilights, and *Dharma* itself know the conduct of all beings.[1]

92. The God Yama (the punisher) is standing in your heart; if you have come to terms with him, you have no need to go on pilgrimage to the Ganga or Kurukshetra.

111. A man of knowledge must not swear unnecessarily, nor for trivial causes; by swearing needlessly, in the hereafter and indeed here, he is lost.

386. The King in whose city there is no thief, none who violates others' women, no defamer, no miscreant who is capable of any act of felony, attains Indra's world.

X.

63. Non-violence, truthfulness, non-thieving, purity, sense-control,—this, in brief, says Manu, is the *Dharma* of all the four castes.

XI. Sins and Expiations

44. By not performing ordained duties, by doing acts which have been condemned and by addiction to objects of senses, it becomes necessary for man to submit himself to expiations. 54. Brahmanicide, drinking wine, theft, taking an elder's wife, and association with those that are guilty of these faults are said to be the five great sins. 55. False claims to higher station, treason to the Crown and false charge against the teacher, these are of the same order as Brahmanicide. 56. Neglect of one's sacred studies, contempt of the scriptures, bearing false witness, murder of a friend, eating of what is prohibited and is not fit to be eaten,—these six are on a par with drinking liquor. 57. Misappropriation of a deposit, theft

[1] The royal dramatist Sudraka uses this idea effectively and gives eloquent expression to it in his play Mricchakatika, Act VIII, verse 24.

of men, horse, silver, land and gems are considered equal to stealing gold; incest and cohabitation with low women and violation of a friend's wife and one's daughter-in-law are considered as heinous as resort to one's elder's woman. 59-66. The secondary sins are: Killing of the cow, conducting a sacrifice for one who is not entitled to perform it, resort to another's wife, selling oneself to another, neglect of one's teacher and parents, neglect of the scriptures and sacred fire, neglect of one's son, a younger brother marrying while the elder is yet unmarried, giving one's daughter in such a marriage, officiating in the sacrifices performed by such brothers, violating a maiden, living on usury, breaking of vows, sale of reservoirs, garden, wife and children, neglect of prescribed rites, abandonment of kinsmen, teaching for a salary, paying a salary for learning, sale of prohibited commodities, being in charge of mines and public installations,[1] injury to herbs, traffic in one's own or others' women, practice of black rites, drugging others, felling green trees for fuel, cooking for oneself, eating prohibited foods, neglecting the fire-rite, stealing, failure to discharge loans, learning heretical books, professional practice of music and dancing, theft of grain, metal and cattle, keeping company with women who take wine, killing women and warriors, merchants and workers, and disbelief.[2]

227. By public confession, repentance, penance, repetition of holy *mantras,* and by gifts, the sinner gains release from sin.

238. That which is hard to overcome, hard to get, hard to reach, hard to do, all that can be accomplished

[1] Mentioned here as these offices are likely to be abused and exploited.

[2] These greater and lesser sins are mentioned and purification is requested in the Resolve (*Sankalpa*) recited at the beginning of many of the major ceremonies, and of bath on sacred occasions and in holy waters.

by penance; penance is hard to be overcome (by anything else).

XII. Good and Evil Acts

3-6. Acts productive of good or bad fruit are born of mind, word and limb; and the courses of men consequent on such acts are superior, middling and inferior. Coveting another's property, contemplating evil acts, false beliefs,—these are the threefold mental act (of sin). Violent accusation, falsehood, tale-bearing, irrelevant talk,—these are the fourfold verbal acts of sin. Misappropriation, wanton violence, resort to other men's women,—these are the threefold physical act (of sin). 10. He who has restrained in his mind the offence by word, mind and body is called the *Tridandin* (the order of Sannyasins of that name). 11. Renouncing this threefold offence with respect to all beings, restraining desire and anger, one attains spiritual realisation. 106. He who reflects upon the *Dharma*-precepts of the Seers with such ratiocination as is in conformity with the Veda and its exegetic science, he alone comprehends *Dharma*, none else.

YAJNAVALKYA SMRITI

I.

5. 123. A man must adopt a vocation appropriate to his age, intellect, means, ability in speaking, dress, learning, family and activity, a vocation free from crookedness and dishonesty.

9. 200. Fitness for receiving a gift is not merely by learning, nor even by penance; where, together with these two, there is noble character, he indeed is a fit recipient of a gift.

13. 343. Royal Duties

When a new territory is won, the principles of conduct, laws and family conventions in force there should be absolutely safeguarded.

13. 349, 351. FATE AND EFFORT

On fate and personal effort depend the success of an undertaking; of the two, fate is only the consolidated force of the personal exertion in a previous birth. Just as a chariot's progress is not achieved by a single wheel, even so, without personal exertion, fate (alone) does not bring success.

II. 2. 21. JUSTICE

When there is conflict among law texts, logical interpretation according to accepted usage weighs. The principles of the texts of righteous conduct (*Dharma Sastra*) are of greater force than those of texts on polity (*Artha Sastra*); this is the understanding.

III. 4. 111. THE RECLUSE SEEKING SELF-REALISATION

Ridding the mind, intellect, memory and senses of all other objects, the Soul, the Lord who dwells within the heart like a lamp, is to be meditated upon.

III. 4. 112-115. MUSIC AS AID TO SELF-REALISATION

By continuous practice of the Saman chants, in the prescribed manner and with concentration of mind, a man attains the Supreme Brahman. The songs entitled *Aparanta, Ullopya, Madraka, Prakari, Auvenaka, Sarobindu, Uttara,* the songs called *Rik, Gatha, Panika,* the music compositions associated with Daksha and Brahman,—the practice of these is indeed liberation. He who knows the principles of the playing on the lute, he who is an adept in the subtle semitones, he who understands the rhythms attains the path to salvation without great exertion.[1]

III. 4. 162. SOUL AND BODY

Just as an actor paints his body with colours and takes different forms, so also the Soul assumes different bodies.

[1] This section of Yajnavalkya is important for the later philosophy of music as an aid to devotion and spiritual realisation.

V. THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

I. SAMADHI PADA (CONCENTRATION)

2. *Yoga* is the control of the activities of the mind. 3. Then (when the mind is unruffled), the Subject (Purusha) is in its own form.

4. At other times (the Subject takes) the form of the mental modifications. 5. The modifications of the mind are fivefold, and painful and nonpainful. 6. They are valid knowledge, invalid knowledge, fancy,[1] sleep and memory.

12. By practice and detachment are these activities of the mind to be suppressed. 13. Practice is the endeavour towards the unruffled state of the mind. 14. Long, intermittent and ardent, it is eventually stabilised. 15. Detachment is the sense of mastery of one who has no thirst for objects of enjoyment, those visible ones or those heard of from scriptures. 16. That detachment is supreme when it is with reference to the (three) primary qualities themselves, in a person who has the discriminate knowledge of the *Purusha* (Self).

17. Concentration is of the type referred to as Conscious when there continue in it gross objects, subtle objects, the sense of blissfulness only or that of mere existence.[2] 18. The other type is that in which impressions alone survive and which results from practice to-

[1] Where there is a verbal concept without a corresponding reality.

[2] These are four states becoming progressively more and more refined, towards a totally object-less condition. Those that rest content at the third stage become *Videhas*; they are yet to see the distinction between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. Those that stop at the fourth stage are *Prakriti-layas, i.e.,* they have seen the Primordial Matter but have yet to see the *Purusha* beyond it.

wards the state of cessation of the above-mentioned fourfold content.

23. Or by Contemplation of God (that concentration is achieved). 24. God is a special Being who is unaffected by afflictions, works, fruits or impressions thereof. 25. In Him is the seed of Omniscience in its utmost magnitude. 26. He is the Teacher of even the earliest teachers, being free from temporal limitation. 27. He is indicated by the mystic syllable *OM*. 28. The repetition of that *OM* and the contemplation of its import (God) (are means of achieving concentration). 29. Thereby is gained inwardness of thought and freedom from obstacles to concentration.

30. The obstacles are disease, inaction, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldly engrossment, delusion, failure to reach and stabilise any stage of concentration. 31. Of a scattered mind, the attendant phenomena are misery, depression, physical tremor and the inward and outward passage of breath. 32. For warding off these, practice of concentration on one thing (is to be made).

33. The mind becomes tranquil and pleasant by the cultivation of friendship, compassion, satisfaction and indifference (respectively) towards the happy, the unhappy, the blessed and the accursed. 34. Or by the emptying and the filling of the lungs. 35. Or an activity fastened on a particular object contributes to the concentrated state. 36. Or that luminous state of mind which is free from all misery and is engrossed in the blissful quality (*Sattva*). 37. Or a mind contemplating the great souls who are free from all passions. 38. Or preoccupation with that state of knowledge which is presented in dream or deep sleep. 39. Or by contemplation upon whatever appeals to one. 40. From atom to infinity extends the mastery of one that practises this concentration.

41. To a mind whose activities have died down, as unto a pure crystal, ensues absorption in and conformity with the cogniser, the means of cognition (*i.e.*, the senses) and their objects. 42. The deliberative mental modification is that which is mixed up with word, sense and understanding thereof. 43. The non-cognitive condition is that in which the cognition of an object is shorn of its recollective aspects of name and form and, as if void of content, shines in itself. 44. These explain also the deliberative and non-deliberative conditions with reference to subtle objects. 45. The condition of subtle objects ends with Primordial Nature (*Prakriti*). 46. All these represent Concentration with an objective consciousness.

47. When there is clarity of the non-deliberative state, there ensues the peace of the Soul. 48. There the mind becomes Truth-laden. 49. Perceiving the ultimate particularities of objects, this truth-laden condition of the mind differs from the general knowledge derived from verbal report or inference. 50. The impressions of this state over-ride those of other (lower) states of Cognition. 51. On this state too being held in restraint, as there is restraint of everything, there arises the object-less Concentration.

II. SADHANA PADA (MEANS)

1. Penance, repetition of *mantra* and the contemplation of God represent the active means of *yoga*. 2. The active means are for the cultivation of concentration and attenuation of the afflictions.

3. Afflictions are nescience, egoism, desire, dislike, and attachment. 4. Nescience is the seed-bed of the further afflictions whether the latter are dormant, incipient, disturbed (by other more powerful ones) or in the ascendent. 5. Nescience is the supposition of the transient, the impure, the miserable and the material (non-

Self) as the permanent, the pure, the happy and the spiritual (the Self). 6. Egoism is the identification of the Seer (Self) with the instrument of seeing. 7. Desire is the clinging to pleasure. 8. Dislike is what is consequent to a painful reaction. 9. Attachment is the clinging to life which is instinctive even in the wise.

11. The activities consequent on these afflictions are to be eradicated by Contemplation.

12. These afflictions are the root of the impression of acts which are experienced in a present or future existence. 13. When the Causes (the afflictions) are operative, acts materialise in the form of birth, life and experience. 14. They are productive of either happiness or suffering according as they proceed from virtue or vice.

15. To one of discrimination, everything is misery, because of the eventual painful culmination of all pleasure, of the heartburn when it is impeded, of the repercussion of contingent pain during the quest, and of the complex and conflicting nature of the action of the three mental qualities. 16. Misery lying ahead is to be warded off.

17. The union of the Seer (the Subject) and the Seen (the Object) is the Cause of what is to be warded off, *viz.*, pain or transmigratory life. 18. The Seen comprises the elements (in their gross and subtle forms) and the senses, has the character of enlightenment, activity and immobility,[1] and serves the purpose of mundane experience as well as its eventual extinction. 19. The gradations of the qualities are the gross elements, the subtle ones, the Intellect, and Primordial Nature. 20. The Seer is of the form of knowledge, and

[1] The chief properties respectively of the three qualities or dispositions of which all material modifications are made, *viz.*, *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*.

though pure, sees yet according to the ideas impressed on the intellect. 21. The very form (justification) of the Seen is that it is only for the experience of the Seer. 22. The Seen, though it has ceased so far as the enlightened one is concerned, is yet in force, being common to the others who are unenlightened. 23. Its union with its master (the Seer) leads to the two realising their nature (as the Seen and the Seer). 24. The Cause of this union is nescience. 25. In the absence of that nescience, the conjunction of the two ceases; this is called the Casting away; this is the Seer's isolation (emancipation). 26. The knowledge of discrimination between the Spirit and the material qualities is the sure means of this Casting away of the latter.

28. By the practice of the accessories of *Yoga,* when the impurities (in the form of the afflictions) disappear, knowledge shines forth culminating in discriminative knowledge. 29. The accessories are eight: restraint, observance, posture, breath-control, withdrawal, concentration, contemplation and absorption. 30. The restraints are non-violence, truthfulness, non-thieving, continence and non-possession. 31. These constitute a great vow when practised without consideration of class, place, time or occasion. 32. The observances are cleanliness, contentment, penance, study or recital of *mantra,* and contemplation of God.

33. When thoughts inimical to *Yoga* assail, their opposites are to be contemplated upon. 34. The inimical thoughts are violence and the like,—inflicted by oneself, caused to be inflicted or approved of when inflicted by others; prompted by avarice, anger and delusion; slight, moderate or severe; and resulting in endless misery and ignorance; their harmful aspects must thus be pondered over.

35. When one is established in non-violence, beings give up their mutual animosity in his presence. 36. When

one is established in truthfulness, the fruits of acts accrue to him. 37. When one is established in non-stealing, all the precious treasures present themselves to one. 38. When one is grounded in continence, energy is retained. 39. When non-possession is firmly established, there is the understanding of the why and wherefore of birth. 40. By cleanliness, disgust at one's body and dissociation from others (*i.e.*, seclusion) result; 41. as also the refinement of the mind (by the elimination of *Rajas* and *Tamas*), pleasantness, one-pointedness, subjugation of the senses and fitness for the vision of the Spirit. 42. From contentment highest happiness results. 43. From penance, the annihilation of the impurity of afflictions and thereby the excellence of body and faculties. 44. By recital of *mantra*, communion with one's favourite deity. 45. By contemplation of God, the accomplishment of concentration. 46. Posture is that in which one can continue for long and with ease.[1] 47. When posture is mastered, the pairs (heat-cold, etc.), do not assail. 49. And while posture is firm, breath-control is the regulation of inhaling and exhaling. 50. The regulation of breath is exhaling, inhaling and storing within; is governed by place, time and number; and is long and subtle. 51. A fourth form of the control of breath is its storing up with attention on an external or internal object. 52. By breath-control, the afflictions that shroud the luminous quality are annihilated; 53. and the mind becomes fit for steady contemplation. 54. Withdrawal is the severance of senses from contact with their objects and the mind being in its own pure form. 55. Thereby supreme control of senses results.

[1] Detailed descriptions of the *Asanas* or *yogic* postures are to be found in works on *Hathayoga;* for instance Hatha-yoga-pradipika of Svatmarama Yogin. There are 84 of them and sometimes five or three of them are said to be important: *Padma, Svastika, Bhadra, Vajra* and *Vira;* and in Hathayoga treatises, *Siddha* also.

III. VIBHUTI PADA (POWERS)

1. Fixing the mind at a point in the body (navel, heart, nose-tip, head, etc.), is Concentration. 2. Contemplation is knowledge being solely engrossed there. 3. That itself becomes absorption when, as if void of Self, it is wholly of the form of the contemplated. 4. These three together at a point are called *Samyama*. 5. By success there, results the effulgence of knowledge.

(Patanjali then describes various occult powers or accomplishments (*Siddhis*) resulting from successful practice of the different aspects of *Yoga*. These are of three kinds: (i) strength, freedom from thirst and hunger, firmness, etc., which are useful for the further practice of *yoga* itself; (ii) the power to isolate or exteriorise the mind, conferring the accomplishment called "*Mahavideha*" or the great disembodied state, the exercise of sensory faculties without the aid of their physical instruments, omniscience, —which represent really successive stages of *Yogic* perfection; (iii) and knowing one's own past and other's mind, entering others' bodies, going in air, etc. The last especially are not to be exhibited or abused, for, aphorism 37 says that these powers as such are really impediments to the attainment and completion of the state of perfection.)

49. Of the knowledge of discrimination itself, between the Spirit and the qualities, the fruits are universal mastery and omniscience. 50. By the successful cultivation of detachment even towards that knowledge, the very seeds of afflictions get destroyed and there is the isolation (emancipation) of the Spirit.

51. When the (superior) powers invite, there should be no yielding or elation, lest there should be recrudescence. 52. By concentration on the smallest particle of time and on sequence, discriminatory knowledge results; 53. and thereby distinction is possible even between two similar objects which have no differentia by genus, characteristics or place. 54. This knowledge born of discrimination comprehends all things, in all modes, and

at the same time; it forms the Saviour-knowledge. 55. The Spirit gains emancipation when it and the Intellect dominated by the luminous quality are of equal purity.

IV. KAIVALYA PADA (EMANCIPATION)

7. To the Yogin acts are neither virtuous nor vicious; to others these are virtuous, vicious and mixed. 8. From these acts only those impressions that are favourable to the particular form that their fruits take, become manifest. 9. There is continuity even in states separated by class, space and time, for the memory and impressions are identical. 10. The impressions are without beginning, as desires are eternal. 11. As these impressions are carried by their ultimate cause nescience, their fruit, namely, body, their substratum the intellect, and their medium the experiences, they cease when the latter cease.

24. To one who has gained the discrimination of the Self being only the Seer and all the activity being the work of the mind, anxiety to inquire into the nature of the Self too ceases or the supposition of the mind as the Self ceases. 25. At this stage, the mind is deeply immersed in discriminate knowledge and laden with *Kaivalya* (the independence of the Soul). 26. As a result of the impressions, other ideas may peep through the gaps in this absorption (the knowledge); 27. and the mastery of those too is to be effected as in the case of the afflictions. 28. When one does not expect any fruit even from contemplation, and has perfect discriminative knowledge, the absorption called *Dharma-megha* (the cloud raining Dharma), results. 29. At that stage, afflictions and actions cease. 30. And by virtue of knowledge at this stage being rid of all enshrouding impurities, little remains to be known. 31. And the qualities (*Gunas*) having fulfilled their role, the evolutionary series comes to an end. 33. *Kaivalya* (the emancipation of the Soul) is the qualities returning to their original unevolved state, having no

longer any purpose of the Soul to be served, or it is the Seer's power established in itself.

VI. EPICS AND PURANAS

I. THE RAMAYANA

BALAKANDA (BOYHOOD)

ORIGIN OF THE EPIC

Sage Valmiki asked the eloquent Narada: "Where in this world is to be found a man endowed with the noblest qualities, valorous and virtuous, truthful and steadfast in vows, upright of character and benevolent to all beings, knowing, capable and always uniformly pleasing in appearance, self-possessed, one who has conquered anger and is free from intolerance?" Narada replied with great delight, "Many and rare are the qualities that you have recited, but hear from me of the man endowed with them all, the scion of the Ikshvaku race well-known among the people as Rama: a disciplined soul, of great heroism, personal beauty and qualities of head and heart." "Rama," Narada said, "was noble, dear to the whole world and one who behaved equally towards all and one whose sense of duty helped to protect those near him and thereby the world and *Dharma* itself." These and many other qualities of his, Narada mentioned and narrated the story of Rama in brief. After listening to Narada on the great qualities and doings of Rama, Valmiki left his hermitage with his pupil Bharadvaja to bathe in the river Tamasa, transparent even as the heart of good men. Moving about in the forest, the sage saw nearby a pair of *Krauncha*[1] birds, hopping merrily and chirping sweetly. Even as the sage was looking, a hunter of evil intent shot the male, which fell in a pool of blood; its mate cried piteously and the heart of the righteous sage melted with compassion. He invoked a curse on the hunter, that for this callous act of

[1] Heron.

his he should soon die. Having pronounced this, the sage reflected and realised that he had made an utterance of four equal feet and one which could be sung to the lute. He exclaimed: "*Let what has issued from me in sorrow (soka) be poetry (sloka)*.[1] Valmiki retired to his hermitage after his bath, and teacher and pupil alike had been repeating the metrical utterance again and again, and were still full of sorrow at the wanton cruelty of the hunter, when Brahma, the Creator, arrived and said that what had issued from Valmiki's lips was in truth poetry, and commanded Valmiki to compose the story of Rama, the embodiment of *Dharma*, in the same metre and on the basis of what Narada had told him of Rama's life. Brahma granted Valmiki the boon that whatever events of Rama's life were not known would be revealed to Valmiki and that no word of his in the poem would be false. Brahma also prophesied, "*As long as hills stand and rivers flow on the surface of this earth, so long will the story of Rama be current in all parts of the world.*"

Purifying himself and sitting facing eastward on the sacred grass,[2] the sage Valmiki then traced the course of his theme through *yoga* and saw it all as clearly as a fruit on his palm. That venerable sage of mighty intellect composed the story of the line of Raghu, of Rama's birth, his heroism, friendliness to all and truthful character, together with the wonderful subsidiary stories.

Birth of the Lord

There was on the banks of the Sarayu the flourishing state of Kosala and therein was the renowned city of Ayodhya founded by that King of men, Manu

[1] In later poetics, this episode is used as explaining the origin of poetry and as the basis of the æsthetic theory of emotional response, *Rasa*.

[2] Darbha or Kusa, *Poa cynosuroides,* used in all rites and sacred acts.

himself. In that city was ruling the virtuous Dasaratha, almost a sage and a keeper of his word. His citizens were gay but righteous, learned, contented each with his possessions, and truthful; there was none among them who was lewd, miserly, cruel or unbelieving; endowed with character and conduct, everybody was as pure as a sage. Dasaratha had eight ministers, versed in counsel and the reading of thought, ever intent on the desirable and the good, clean and devoted; there were two priests, Vasishtha and Vamadeva, and also other counsellors. Under their administration, carried on with purity and one mind, there was, neither in the metropolis nor in the countryside, any liar or evil character intent on another's wife.

Such was the virtuous reign and such the greatness of King Dasaratha; but he had no son to continue his line. As he was thinking about it, it occurred to him that he might, for the sake of progeny, perform an *Asva-medha,* a horse sacrifice. This he did with the help of the sage named Risyasringa. The gifted Risyasringa then proposed that he perform a special sacrifice, (*Putriya* or *Putra-kama-ishti*), enjoined in the Atharvaveda for the birth of a son.

Just at the time of receiving the oblations, the gods told Brahma: "Revered Lord! With your boons, the Rakshasa[1] named Ravana is tormenting us and we are unable to subdue him; he makes the three worlds tremble, tramples upon the sages and carries away women. You must find a way to do away with him." Vishnu appeared at that time and to Him the gods and Brahma together said that they enjoined Him for the good of the world to be born in the world to kill Ravana. "Choose Dasaratha, the saintly King of Ayodhya and to his three wives, comparable to the Goddesses of

[1] The Rakshasa, like the Asura, is a species of demon.

Modesty, Prosperity and Fame, be born as four sons and kill Ravana." Vishnu promised that he would kill the cruel Ravana and his men and live in the world of men as ruler of the world. Brahma asked the gods to be born in the world of monkeys, with all their invincible valour, to aid the Lord in the mission of his incarnation; and they became thousands upon thousands of powerful monkeys with power to take any form they pleased, and spread themselves over the hills and forests.

Then in the twelfth month after the sacrifice, in the month of *Chaitra*,[1] on the ninth day of the bright fortnight, in the constellation of *Punarvasu*,[2] when five of the planets were in the ascendent, and Jupiter and the moon were in conjunction, in the zodiacal sign of Cancer, Kausalya, the chief Queen of Dasaratha, gave birth to Rama who was endowed with all beauty, a manifestation of Lord Vishnu,—the son who caused the Ikshvaku race to increase. Queen Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata in the next constellation *Pushya* in Pisces, and Queen Sumitra gave birth in the next constellation *Aslesha*, in Cancer, to the twins Lakshmana and Satrughna. There was great rejoicing and Dasaratha gave lavishly in celebration of the event. On the thirteenth day, Vasishtha, with great delight performed the sacrament of giving the boys their names, Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Satrughna. Rich in natural endowments, they qualified themselves also in all lores under their teachers. Among them, Rama was supreme, veritably a God among beings; and of valour true and displayed in righteous cause, he endeared himself to the world like the stainless moon. From the cradle, Lakshmana was always attached to Rama, appearing verily like his external breath, for without him, Rama would not sleep or take food; when Rama went out on horseback for a hunt, Lakshmana was always at

[1] April-May.

[2] The seventh lunar mansion.

hand, armed and guarding him; equally dear was Satrughna to Bharata.

VISVAMITRA

When the sons had completed their all-round education, the King assembled his teachers, ministers and relations and considered the question of their marriage. When he was in the midst of his deliberations, there arrived at his gates the great sage Visvamitra, brilliant son of Kusika Gadhin. The flurried doorkeepers rushed in and announced the sage's arrival and Dasaratha welcomed him, hailing his arrival like that of nectar, of rains in drought, and of sons to a childless man. "What would I not give you, O most deserving? Doubly are you worthy of my honour; once an eminent royal sage *(Rajarshi)*, you became one of the foremost Brahman sages *(Brahmarshi)* by your penances." Highly pleased at the reception and the promise, Visvamitra said that as a pupil of Vasishtha and a man of his word, Dasaratha would grant his request. While he was engaged in austerities and had to perform a sacrifice, two Rakshasas, Maricha and Subahu, agents of Ravana, disguising themselves as they pleased, obstructed its performance by raining down blood and flesh, and polluting the altar. "Such is the present austerity of mine that I shall not give way to anger and curse them. You must give me this young Rama, your eldest son, of true valour; protected by me, he will be able to destroy the miscreant Rakshasas; and I shall confer on him manifold welfare whereby he shall attain fame in all the three worlds; in fact, none but Rama can kill them, and you must not display here your paternal weakness. *I know Rama as the great Soul of unfailing prowess, as also this effulgent Vasishtha and others established in penance.* Send him with me for ten days and have no grief about it." These words of Visvamitra left Dasaratha unconscious for a moment. Regaining himself, Dasaratha pleaded: "Rama,

yet to attain the majority of sixteen years, is hardly equal to a battle, and that with the deceitful Rakshasas; I would fain go with my vast armies; without Rama, I cannot live even for a moment; you ought not to take him away from me." Visvamitra said in anger that it was unworthy of a descendant of Raghu to make a promise and not keep it and that if Dasaratha took pleasure in being untruthful, he would leave the place. As the ground trembled under the angered sage, Dasaratha's preceptor, sage Vasishtha told the King that for him who upheld his duties and vows, it was improper to go back on his word and it was for the weal of his son that the sage had come so far and besought him. Dasaratha no longer hesitated after that and gave Visvamitra not only Rama but Lakshmana too.

Visvamitra went ahead and the two young brothers followed. Reaching the southern bank of the Sarayu, Visvamitra called upon the sweet name "Rama" and asked the brothers to purify themselves and receive from him the two *mantras*, *Bala* and *Atibala*, mothers of all mystic powers, which would rid them of hunger, thirst, fatigue and ailment, and endow them with rejuvenated power to withstand the demons. Rama took them and shone with a new lustre. They spent the night there, and on the morrow morn the sage addressed Rama: "O eminent offspring of Kausalya, dawn is up; *arise, most heroic of men! the divine duty for the day has to be done*."[1] After the morning ablutions and prayers, they crossed the river Ganga near the confluence of the river Sarayu. Visvamitra completed, as it were, the training Vasishtha had given to Rama; he not only imparted powerful *mantras* and equipped Rama with divine missiles but at his early age took him over some of the most

[1] This verse is popularly recited every morning as one arises from bed, and serves to remind man of the ordained daily duty he has to perform.

holy sites and sacred spots and filled him with the exalted stories of gods and sages, and thus completed the preparation for his coming mission. Some of these related to Lord Vishnu's own incarnations and formed, so to say, a reminder to the Lord of the great purpose of his incarnation. To the south of the confluence was a terrible forest infested by the female demon Tataka, wife of Sunda and mother of Maricha, and possessing the strength of a thousand elephants. Visvamitra called upon Rama to kill her when she appeared, without any scruples on the score of her being a woman; for her riddance was a matter of good to the universe; more especially was it a duty laid on those entrusted with the protection of the world. Rama accepted, as it was the sage's command and as his father's direction was to obey the sage. The sound of Rama's bowstring brought the mammoth form sweeping formidably along the skies. Rama first tried to wound her limbs partly to see whether, without actually killing her, she could be restrained. Finally he was forced to kill her. The gods and sages praised Rama and thanked Visvamitra for the service rendered by Tataka's removal.

Staying that night there, next morning, Visvamitra bestowed on Rama all the miraculous missiles in his possession. They then proceeded towards Visvamitra's hermitage, the Siddhasrama. The congregation of sages at Siddhasrama welcomed Visvamitra and the boys. The brothers guarded the hermitage for six days and nights. At the end of that period when the sacrifice was reaching its climax, the two demons appeared suddenly and poured out a torrent of blood. With one arrow, the fire-missile, Rama struck down Subahu; and the other, Maricha, he drove away with the wind-missile. The sacrifice then reached unobstructed completion and the sages complimented Rama for justifying the name Siddhasrama.[1]

[1] The name signifies a place of accomplishment (*siddhi*).

On the morrow, when Rama asked what more remained to be done, the sages said that King Janaka of Mithila, who had a miraculous bow, was performing a sacrifice and the brothers might accompany them there and see the divine weapon of immense strength, kept for worship, which none, divine or mortal, had been able to lift or string. Visvamitra took leave of the spot where he had attained the successful completion of his austerities and went in a northerly direction; a hundred carts carrying sages accompanied him; and even the birds and animals who had kept him company at Siddhasrama could hardly help accompanying Visvamitra. At sunset, they were on the banks of the Son where they camped for the night. Sitting in front of Visvamitra long into the night, Rama listened to more of the uplifting stories of those renowned places. The story of the famous cities of the east, Kausambi, Mahodaya, Girivraja, Vasumati, were of special interest as they were connected with the history of Visvamitra's own family. Next morning, they started and reached the Ganga in the afternoon. There, after the due performance of their noontime duties, they gathered round Visvamitra and Rama desired to hear the story of the Ganga.[1] The story[2] was of the utmost value in that it brought home to Rama the glory of his ancestry.

Listening to the story of the Ganga's descent, they did not realise that night sped like a moment. And with Lakshmana, Rama went on pondering all through the

[1] The river Ganga may be called the main artery of Hinduism.

[2] The story of the descent of the celestial stream Ganga to the mortal world was connected with the salvation of the sons of King Sagara, an ancestor of Rama. Hence, owing to the religious merit attaching to it, the cantos of Valmiki's epic describing this story, are read or recited at the time of the Sraddha or the ceremony performed to propitiate the spirits of one's ancestors. The story of Ganga comprises also an account of the birth of Siva's son Kumara which forms the theme of one of the two longer poems of Kalidasa, the Kumarasambhava.

night over the uplifting narration of Visvamitra. Crossing the Ganga next morning, they saw the city Visala, which was associated with King Visala, a son of Rama's own ancestor Ikshvaku.

Thence proceeding north-east they came to where Janaka's sacrifice was being held. Janaka heard of Visvamitra's arrival and received him with his preceptor Satananda, son of Gautama. Visvamitra informed Janaka about the two sons of Dasaratha who had come with him. Then, Satananda, completing the elevating stories narrated by Visvamitra, told Rama and Lakshmana the full glory of the sage whom they were accompanying. Satananda recounted the story of the staggering achievements of Visvamitra who rose from the state of an aggressive king to the sublime heights of a supreme sage.[1]

The Marriage

Janaka invited Visvamitra to show the bow to the boys. Janaka said that the bow was Siva's own, deposited by Him in the line of the Videhas. Janaka continued: "While I was ploughing and clearing the sacrificial ground there arose from earth this daughter of mine, Sita; I set for her hand the price of valour; suitors have to try their strength on this bow before winning her; no king has so far succeeded in lifting or stringing it; if Rama can succeed in doing it, I shall give her to this son of Dasaratha." A hundred and fifty strong men brought the bow in a cart with eight wheels. Visvamitra said: "My child Rama, behold this bow." Rama opened the lid of the box, looked at the bow and told Visvamitra: "I shall touch it and shall try to lift and

[1] The story of Visvamitra's penances and achievements of spiritual perfection are fundamental not only to the epic, for it was to him that the poet assigned the making of much that Rama became, but to the whole conception of Hindu spiritual culture and the concept of penance as the most efficacious means of reaching perfection. And Visvamitra is the father of this culture, because the *Gayatri*, its root, is his *mantra*.

string it." "Do so" said the sage. Playfully Rama seized it by the middle and strung it; thousands looking on, he fitted an arrow to the string and pulled; it broke with a terrific noise, shaking the earth, and knocked down everyone except the Sage, Janaka and the two boys. "Winning Rama for her husband, Sita shall shed glory on the line of the Janakas. With your leave, let messengers hasten to Ayodhya and respectfully bring here King Dasaratha." On these words of Janaka, Visvamitra sent messengers who reached Ayodhya after three nights' journey. With his fourfold army and immense riches and presents, Dasaratha reached the Videhas after a march of four days. Janaka welcomed him and his preceptor Vasishtha, and requested him to have the marriage celebrated on the morrow. Dasaratha answered that this was for Janaka to decide. On the next day Janaka sent messengers to Sankasya to bring his younger brother Kusadhvaja also. Dasaratha was invited to join Janaka at his abode and in the assemblage Vasishtha recited the genealogy of the bridegroom together with the achievements of his leading ancestors. On his part, Janaka himself recited the genealogy and offered to give not only Sita to Rama, but his other daughter Urmila to Lakshmana. "Thrice do I say, I give, and there is no doubt in this," concluded Janaka.

The marriage, Janaka announced, was to be solemnized in the constellation *Uttara-Phalguni,* three days from then and he said that preliminary ceremonies could be begun. Visvamitra approved of the idea of giving Urmila to Lakshmana and proposed that the two daughters of the younger brother Kusadhvaja might also be given to the two other sons of Dasaratha,—Bharata and Satrughna. Nothing was more pleasing to both parties than this complete union of the Kosalas and the Videhas and the marriage of the four sons and four daughters on the same day.

Bharata's uncle Yudhajit, of the Kekayas, had come to Ayodhya to take Bharata home to stay; having heard there of the marriage at Mithila, he too came to Mithila. Next morning Dasaratha and his sons got ready; Vasishtha arranged everything necessary for the marriage; dressed in yellow-white silk with a swan-design, a fragrant red upper garment, and fully bedecked, Sita appeared like a flash of lightning and Janaka placed her in front of the fire; then Janaka told the son of Kausalya: "Here is Sita, my daughter, companion to you in the discharge of your duties; accept her; may welfare attend you; vowed to your devoted service, at your heels always like your shadow, take her hand in yours." So saying Janaka poured the holy water of offering, and the heavens acclaimed the event. Then Janaka followed with the giving of the hand of Urmila to Lakshmana, Mandavi to Bharata and Srutakirti to Satrughna. Clasping the delicate hands of their brides, the four sons walked round the fire, and the sages and the elders; with music and dance, the marriage was celebrated and the scions of the Raghu race retired to their quarters with their wives.

When that night was past, Visvamitra showered his blessings on the sons, took leave of the two kings and departed northwards to the Himalayas. Taking leave of Janaka, Dasaratha started for his city, and Janaka loaded him with vast riches for the daughters and a long retinue of male and female servants. As Dasaratha returned, evil omens appeared; ominous birds hooted; but animals moved auspiciously, indicating danger coming but subsiding. Dust and darkness arose, and close upon these, there appeared on the horizon the terrible form of Bhargava Rama, son of Jamadagni, the destroyer of kings, bearing on his shoulders his battle-axe (*Parasu*). He challenged Rama of the Raghus; but the latter sub-

dued Parasurama's pride.[1] Then Parasurama praised Rama as the great God, assured him of his good wishes and left for the Mahendra mountain where he was performing penance.

The party then resumed their journey to Ayodhya. The city received them with a festive appearance everywhere. The Queens and other women received their daughters-in-law who paid their respects to all the elders and worshipped in the temples in their new home. The sons lived happily in their respective palaces enjoying the company of their wives and serving their parents. After some time, Dasaratha sent Bharata with his uncle Yudhajit who had been waiting to take him, to the Kekayas. Satrughna accompanied Bharata. At his father's instance, the righteous Rama attended to the state duties and did for the people things both pleasing and beneficent. The father, the Brahmans, the guilds,—everybody was satisfied with Rama's conduct. With Sita, Rama enjoyed himself, his heart on her and himself in her heart; Sita was dear to him because she was the wife found for him by his parents and elders, and their love increased all the more by reason of her qualities and beauty; the heart alone knew that mutual love; whatever was innermost in their hearts, that heart spoke to heart in clear accents; verily, with her, Rama shone like Lord Vishnu with the Goddess Lakshmi.

AYODHYA KANDA (AYODHYA)

THE PROPOSED CORONATION AND EXILE

Bharata and Satrughna stayed at the city of Kekaya, but were always in Dasaratha's mind. They were all

[1] Parasurama was the earlier incarnation which Lord Vishnu had taken to put down the kings who had become arrogant and violent; now that the incarnation as Rama in the solar race of kings had been taken by the Lord Himself to set the example of an ideal king, there was no more need for the earlier incarnation whose force was therefore withdrawn. See below, the Bhagavata, p. 378.

indeed dear to the King, but Rama, superior by his qualities, delighted Dasaratha most of all; was he not the eternal Lord, Vishnu, born among men at the request of the gods for the destruction of the haughty Ravana? Always of a tranquil nature, Rama spoke softly, spoke first, and with a smile; he did not retort even when one spoke to him harshly. He was gratified with even a single good turn, in whatever manner it might be done and, being self-possessed, remembered not the bad turns, however numerous they might be. Exceedingly valorous, he was yet humble; he honoured the elders, learning from them whenever there was leisure. Attached to the people and winning their attachment; kind, controlled in anger and sympathetic towards the suffering; he had an exalted notion of the duty of the Kshatriya to which he was born; and pure fame he deemed equal to the great heavenly status. He had no taste for perverse discussions, though in developing an argument, he was as eloquent as the god of speech himself. He had the sense of time and place, and he was the only one in the world who could see through a man and yet continued to be ever good. He never felt wretched, was straightforward and endowed with memory and imagination. He was proficient in worldly conventions and behaviour. Quiet in bearing, he never disclosed his mind and kept his deliberations to himself, though he conferred with others. He made himself felt whether pleased or displeased; and knew the time to give or withhold. He never had any evil obsessions, never uttered a foul word, was never lazy or careless; he knew his own faults and those of others. He was an excellent judge of character, and knew how, at the proper moment, to humble a man or exalt him. He knew how to earn and spend money; not only in the higher branches of knowledge, but in the miscellaneous accomplishments too he was eminently qualified, and could enjoy without either indolence or

endangering material welfare or propriety; he was well versed in the recreational arts, but knew the proper place for everything. Free from intolerance, anger, pride or envy, he never insulted his fellows, but, at the same time, was not prone to yield to the pressure of circumstances. With these qualities, Rama shone like the effulgent Sun: Earth herself desired him as her lord.

The old King longed to see Rama crowned while yet he was alive. After thinking it over, he considered, in consultation with his ministers, that he might make Rama *Yuvaraja,* heir apparent. He called several princes and representatives of the people but he was not anxious to bring either the Kekaya king or Janaka, for he argued that they might hear of the happy event later. The assembly of these and his own counsellors met and he represented to them his long service and need to retire. When he suggested Rama as fit to be his successor, there was unanimous acclamation. "Indeed, we are thirsting to see Rama mounted on the royal elephant with the parasol over his head," they said. To be sure of their mind, Dasaratha asked them again, and they burst into applause of Rama's endowments: "Rama has not returned unsuccessful from any engagement; when he returns, he dismounts and enquires of his subjects like one's own kith and kin, enquires indeed of their private welfare, as a father would of his sons; in the calamities of the people, he becomes extremely pained and in their festivities he rejoices like a parent; women, old and young, bow to the deities, morning and evening, praying for Rama's sake." Dasaratha replied to the assembly: "This is the fair month of *Chaitra* when the world is in bloom; let all arrangements be made for the coronation." Dasaratha issued instructions for profuse gifts, elaborate religious ceremonies and universal festivities. As Rama came, handsome in the extreme, capturing the eyes and hearts of the people by his beauty and nobility,

Dasaratha gazed and gazed and was still unsatisfied. The King announced the decision that Rama's coronation would take place on the morrow and gave him instructions on the eve of his becoming heir apparent. Friends rushed and informed Kausalya, and she scattered lavish gifts of cows, gold and gems. Rama then returned to his mansion.

Dasaratha sent for Rama again and told him that astrologers saw a change for the worse impending in his planets and that he desired an immediate coronation; further, he felt an urge for haste in his mind and said: "Let it be done before the mind changes; men's minds are inconstant; and such important events are beset with many obstacles." Rama returned and went to his mother, along with whom he saw Sumitra also. She was meditating upon Lord Narayana; Rama informed her of the King's resolve and she showered her blessings on him. Rama turned to Lakshmana nearby and said: "Lakshmana, rule this kingdom with me; you are my second self; to you too has the Royal Fortune come; enjoy; life or kingdom I desire only for your sake."

Vasishtha ordained for Rama the fast that was to precede the coronation ceremony. As Vasishtha returned from Rama's palace to the King's, the streets were billowing like a tumultuous sea with the festive crowds, and Vasishtha had to force his way through and reach the King slowly. Rama bathed, worshipped Lord Narayana with austere mind and fasted that night. Rising betimes next morning, he heard the music of the auspicious day filling the city; temples and bazaars, towers and mansions were decorated; flags were flown; musicians and dancers started out; lampstands were set up; boys gathered together, played and talked about Rama's coronation.

Accidentally, Manthara, the hunchback attendant living with Kaikeyi since her younger days, happened

to ascend the higher floor of the palace and see the festive city streets. She enquired of the nurse nearby, who revealed with a heart bursting with glee: "Rama, who has conquered anger, is going to be installed as heir apparent." The hunchback hurried down and burning with anger, woke up the reclining Kaikeyi, and said: "Get up, you fool! Danger for you is at hand, and you take no notice; you brag about your husband's love for you! It is all fickle, gone like the current of a river. Everlasting misery for you has begun; Dasaratha is going to crown Rama as heir apparent; you are born in a palace and yet are ignorant of the cruel ways of royalty; your husband is a deceitful speaker of sweet words; you are naïve and have been deceived; having cleverly transferred Bharata to Kekaya, the King is conferring the kingdom on Rama." Kaikeyi was only too glad to hear of Rama's coronation and even presented Manthara with an ornament in return for the happy news. Manthara threw away the ornament pressed on her by Kaikeyi and Kaikeyi again praised Rama only: "Rama is the eldest and should succeed to the heir apparentship; Bharata may take the kingdom after Rama; as is Bharata so is Rama to me; nay, Rama serves me more than even his own mother Kausalya." Manthara did not flag in her efforts and went on stressing the undesirable consequences: "You fool, after Rama, Rama's son will be king, not Bharata; Rama may even harm Bharata, who may even now retire into the forests from his uncle's own house. And mark, you had always, in your pride, humiliated Rama's mother; your rival Kausalya will now wreak vengeance." Suddenly Kaikeyi began to speak as one completely converted by Manthara to her own view: "Manthara, this day I shall send Rama to the forest and have Bharata installed as heir apparent; find a means to do these." Manthara reminded her of the two boons that Dasaratha had bestowed on her for the help ren-

dered by her in the great battle between the gods and demons when Dasaratha had gone to help the gods; she told Kaikeyi to demand with these two boons, the coronation of Bharata and the exile of Rama for fourteen years. "Get into the chamber of the angry,[1] lie down weeping; do not look at your husband or talk; do not yield to any temptations he may offer; insist on these two boons only." So did she tutor her and Kaikeyi was transformed into an unruly mare. She wondered at the hunchback's intellect, praised the wisdom and magic lying in her hunch and adorned it with ornaments.

Dasaratha desired to tell his beloved Kaikeyi about the coronation. The doorkeeper's information that Kaikeyi had retired into her chamber of anger upset him completely. There the innocent old King saw his young wife, dearer to him than life, lying on the ground with evil intent. "Shall I bring doctors? Whom do you want to please or whom do you want to punish? You know your power over me; by my life, tell me what you desire! I shall do it," said Dasaratha who was passionately attached to her. Kaikeyi opened her cruel mouth and said that she would speak if he promised to keep his word. Dasaratha, prey to passion, said, "You know, that beside you, I love only Rama; on him I swear; I swear on Rama, deprived of whose sight I cannot live even for a moment; I will do what you desire; tell me." Kaikeyi called upon heaven and earth and all the gods, beings and Nature to bear witness to the promise of the truthful Dasaratha. She reminded him of the two long-standing boons given by him in the battle of the gods and demons and with their aid demanded that with the same arrangements in progress for Rama's coronation, Bharata was to be anointed and that Rama was to be banished as a recluse in the forest for fourteen years. The King cried

[1] A room in the palace to which persons in anger retired.

in anguish and fell unconscious. Regaining his consciousness after a long while, he asked Kaikeyi: "Cruel, evil woman, blight of the family! What harm has Rama done you, Rama who has served you as a mother more than even Bharata, as you have yourself told me many a time? When the whole living world is singing his virtues, what fault of his shall I cite and abandon him? The world may live without the sun, or even crops without water; but I cannot live without Rama; abandon this evil resolve; if you want, I shall touch your feet with my head." Kaikeyi said in reply: "Break not your plighted word; your evil design is evidently to make Rama king and take Kausalya in preference to me; I shall swallow poison and die before your very eyes; I shall not see Rama's mother receiving the salute of others even for a day." Unable to say a word in reply, Dasaratha simply looked her in the face, sighed "Rama" and fell like a tree struck by the axe. After a time he again addressed her: "Who has poisoned your mind? You talk like one possessed of an evil spirit. Without Rama, Bharata himself would not take the kingdom; in matters of *Dharma,* I consider Bharata to be more staunch than even Rama. How shall I face Kausalya if Rama is banished? Whenever that noble lady came to serve me like a servant and friend, like a wife, sister and mother, desiring always my happiness, I did not, for your sake, treat honourably that lady deserving honour. I am reaping the fruit of my conduct. I shall be no more and you shall carry on the kingdom as a widow along with your son. It is a pity that my son is so virtuous that if I ask him to go he will go; how pleasing it would be to me now if he will disobey me! I will surely die and when I die, Kaikeyi, let not Bharata, if this exile of Rama is welcome to him, perform my obsequies."

The city was busy and crowded from the earliest

hours of the morning; Vasishtha managed to reach the palace through the crowd; the golden pots of water from the Ganga and the sea, the auspicious seat for anointment, eight handsome maidens, elephants, chariot drawn by four horses, palanquins, the royal white parasol, the throne, articles needed for performing the religious rites, musicians and dancers, Brahmans and cows, representatives of the city, country and guilds, princes,—everything was ready. Vasishtha sent word to the King to hasten. The minstrel-charioteer Sumantra sang his morning panegyric to the King to wake him up, and announced to him that all was in readiness for the coronation and that everybody was waiting for him. "Sumantra, you are breaking my heart," said Dasaratha; and when Sumantra stood bewildered, Kaikeyi told him: "The King had been awake looking forward to the joy of Rama's coronation and is tired; bring Rama." Sumantra, however, moved not till Dasaratha expressed his desire to see Rama. Sumantra went to Rama's mansion, saw him there dressed and ready with Sita, and informed him of the King's desire to see him in Kaikeyi's chamber. Rama came listening to the praises and good wishes bestowed by the people. As he went, none was able to take his mind or eyes from that prince of men, even after Rama had passed them; "*he who has not seen Rama and whom Rama has not seen shall live despised in this world; his very self will loathe him,*"—so the people exclaimed. Crossing three courtyards in a chariot and the fourth on foot, Rama reached his father, whom he saw in Kaikeyi's company, in a miserable condition. As his son saluted him, the King could just utter "Rama" and nothing more. It was unusual, and even Rama was taken aback; for, such was Rama's arrival that in the past, even if the King was in an angry mood, he used to become calm on seeing Rama; as Rama could not understand the present plight of the King he paid his respects

to Kaikeyi and asked her: "Have I, in my folly, done anything offensive? Is the King sick? Is there any bad news from Bharata or Satrughna? Without satisfying the King and without obeying his word, I do not want to stay even for a minute. *How could one fail to behave properly to this visible god, his father, this root to which man owes his very being?* Have you, in the freedom of your love, told him anything harsh?" Kaikeyi replied shamelessly in these selfish words: "No. The King has something on his mind which he is afraid to tell in your presence; having promised me, he wishes to retract; right and truth are the root of everything and neither in anger nor for your sake, can he retract. Therefore, if you promise to carry it out, be it good or bad, I shall tell you." Rama said: "What a pity that you should thus doubt me! On my father's word, I will even fall into the fire, take poison or drown myself in the sea. Tell me, and I shall do, I promise; *Rama does not go back on what he has spoken.*" Kaikeyi told him of the two boons extorted by her from the King by which Bharata should become king and he, Rama, should go into the forests for fourteen years, with matted locks and garment of skin. Indeed the words were tantamount to death, but Rama was not even shaken. "Be it so; I shall go; but may I know why the King does not speak to me? Why does not he himself tell me of Bharata's coronation? I, however, would without the persuasion of anybody, give in gladness to Bharata anything including my life. Let Bharata be brought immediately; I shall depart at once," said Rama. Kaikeyi pressed him to leave quickly and was impatient at the delay. "The reason why your father does not speak to you is that so long as you have not gone, he would neither bathe nor eat," said she.

As her words fell on his ears, the King cursed himself and fell in a swoon from his bed. After lifting up

the King to the couch, Rama, on whom the last words of Kaikeyi fell like a lash, told her calmly: "*Queen, I cannot bear living in this world, intent on material things; know me as equal to the sages, devoted solely to Dharma.* You evidently saw no good in me, as, having as much right over me, you did not yourself ask me to go and told it all to the King. I shall leave for the Dandaka forests this very day, taking time only to see my mother and pacify Sita." The King wept loudly. Rama saluted the feet of his father, as also those of the ignoble Kaikeyi and hastened out in all his splendour. With eyes full of tears, extremely angry, Lakshmana followed him. *The loss of the kingdom reduced not the excelling grace on Rama's countenance. As he gave up the kingdom and desired to go to the forests no untoward change was seen in him who was like one high above all the world.* That inherent cheerfulness which was characteristic of him, the heroic Rama did not abandon.

To his mother's mansion, Rama came direct along with Lakshmana. Praying for Rama's welfare, she was offering oblations in fire. She pronounced blessings on him and he broke the terrible news to her. She fell like a branch lopped from a tree. Rama lifted her up and consoled her. Kausalya wept: "Barrenness would have been my only sorrow, if you had not been born at all. Never have I enjoyed anything good or happy with the King. I have been waiting these years for some good through you. I, the senior Queen, will hear from my inferiors all kinds of unkind, heart-rending words; such insults were mine even while you were here; they will be all the more now, in your absence; not enjoying the esteem of the King, I have been subjected to humiliations even from the attendants of Kaikeyi; how can I look upon that ever irate, harsh-toned face of Kaikeyi? I have grown old and weak with austerities but now it will become impossible for me to hold on to life."

When Lakshmana saw Rama's mother weeping, he exclaimed: "I too do not approve of this departure of Rama to the forest, leaving the kingdom on the word of a woman. Perverse, old, overcome by passion, what will not the King say?; I do not see anyone who can speak, to his face or behind his back, anything ill of Rama, who is kind even to his enemies. If the King is really acting under Kaikeyi's orders, let him be killed. Even an elder, if he does not know right from wrong in his haughtiness is to be punished.[1] Mother, I say this in love; I swear, not the forest only, but blazing fire will I enter before Rama." Kausalya drew Rama's attention to Lakshmana's words and added: "If, as a righteous soul, you prefer to act meritoriously, stay here and cherish your mother with due care; a mother deserves as much respect as a father, and I not only do not permit you, but prevent you from going to the forest. If you go, leaving me here in grief, I shall fast unto death; the sin of my death will be yours." Rama pointed out: "I am not promulgating any rules unprecedented or perverse; none comes to grief by carrying out his father's word." And to Lakshmana he said: "Your love for me and valour I know; my mother's grief, poignant as it is, takes no note of the bearings of truth and peace; father has made a promise and the word has to be kept; it is on the word of father that Kaikeyi has asked me to go. *Abandon, therefore, this ignoble military mind; resort to Dharma, not to violence*; follow my mind." Seeing Lakshmana still agitated, Rama said words that he alone knew how to speak on such an occasion. "Of virtue, material gain and desire, all the three are secured by safeguarding the first; *to seek only material gain or to be solely addicted to desire is not praiseworthy*. Get over this insult; take your stand on good cheer; let our

[1] This is a Smriti injunction.

father save himself from the danger of transgressing truth and losing the other world. It is only by my departure that Kaikeyi will be happy. I have decided and prepared my mind for it and I do not propose to do violence to myself; I shall leave quickly. Take it that Fate is responsible for this and not Kaikeyi." Rama thought that some lesson was due to be brought home to his mother also; he told her: "Kaikeyi has deceived father; I shall be out in the forest; who is to look after him? To leave one's husband is the most cruel thing for a woman; that derogatory thing you should not even think of doing; that is the eternal *dharma*." This exhortation set at rest Kausalya's agitation. Kausalya then yielded, asked him to go and return safely, invoked the blessings of all the divinities on him and hoped that they would all live and enjoy the happy day of Rama's return.

From his mother, Rama then went to Sita's apartments. Having finished her religious ceremonies, Sita, who was well versed in the royal duties, was looking forward to the coronation. When Rama reached her abode, he could not suppress his sorrow, which now became evident. "Why are you sad? Today is the auspicious *Pushya*[1] and why have not the ceremonies yet been performed?" asked Sita. Rama gave her the bad news and informing her of his resolve to go to the forest, he said: "I have come to take leave of you; Bharata will be the heir apparent; conduct yourself carefully; praise me not in his hearing; during my absence devote yourself to austerities and service to my parents; my old heartbroken mother especially deserves your best attention." Sita could hardly endure these words of her husband. With her great love turning into indignation, she replied: "Why do you speak in levity such absurd things?

[1] The constellation under which a royal coronation takes place.

My lord! father, mother, brother, son, daughter-in-law, all enjoy their respective fortunes; but the wife alone shares her husband's fortunes; neither father, sons, her own self, mother or friend, but *the husband is the sole refuge of his wife*; if you have started already for the forests, I shall go ahead of you, clearing the path of thorns; *whatever be the husband's state, his company is best for the wife*; my father and mother have taught me amply how I should conduct myself and I stand in no need of further instruction on this point. Thinking only of following my lord, I shall enjoy the forest even as I would my father's own mansion; I too can observe austerities and with you, I shall sport in the forests fragrant with honey; surely you can take care of me, when you take care of so many others! I shall accompany you and you cannot prevent me; I long to see the hills, trees, ponds and rivers and bathe and sport with you and forget even a thousand years; even heaven I detest, if it is without you."

Rama tried to dissuade her, pointing out the perils and rigours of forest life. This brought tears to Sita's eyes. She said: "That a woman cannot live without her husband is a *dharma* which you have yourself pointed out to me. Moreover there is another matter; while young and still at my father's home, Brahman fortune-tellers read my future and prophesied life in the forest for me; and I have ever since been looking forward enthusiastically to it; but I never imagined it was to be enjoyed in your company; a nun also foretold to my mother this forest life, and I have myself requested you frequently to take me out to the woods. I accompany you; my husband is my god and in my next birth too you will be my husband; your joys and sorrows are also mine; if you take me not, I will take my life." When Rama still hesitated and tried to dissuade her, she upbraided him with the freedom of her great love and

esteem for him: "Why are you afraid? Methinks my father pitched upon a son-in-law who is a woman in male guise! I wonder what fear weighs upon you; without me, you ought not to go." Carrying on in this strain before an apparently unmoved husband, poor Sita broke down and wept, clinging to Rama. Rama embraced her, and comforting her, said: "Divine lady, even heaven I abjure at the cost of your grief; as unto God Himself, to me there is no fear anywhere; however, without knowing your mind completely I do not want to take you, capable though I am of taking care of you; you are destined for forest life with me; I cannot leave you even as I cannot forsake my fame; follow me, stand by me in my *dharma*; prepare for the forest; give away our things to Brahmans or whoever asks; make haste, tarry not; your ornaments, dress, couches, vehicles—give away these to our servants and Brahmans."

Rama tried to argue with Lakshmana also but Lakshmana said that he had already been permitted to accompany him and there was no point in preventing him now; indeed, he had already started for the forest. Rama asked him who would take care of Dasaratha and Kausalya in the new situation at the palace. Lakshmana said in his usual manner: "If Bharata does not take care of them, I shall do away with him and his adherents; mother Kausalya can look after herself, and also a thousand persons like me, that Queen who has at her own disposal the revenue of a thousand villages; take me and you will have my assistance when I go in advance showing the way, bring you fruits and roots for food, even as you sport with Sita on the hills, and I shall look after everything when you are asleep or awake." "Start," said Rama, and he added, "take our bows, our impenetrable armour, our inexhaustible quivers, our flashing swords; all those divine weapons of ours which are being worshipped in our teacher's

abode, bring them and be quick."

Then the brothers and Sita presented their possessions to Brahmans, servants and other supplicants; each of them was loaded with presents and requested to guard the homes of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita till their return.

The three then went to visit Dasaratha; as they walked on foot, people mounted high storeys to see the tragic sight. They cried: "In his absence, we shall perish like water animals without water; he is the root and we are the branches, foliage, flowers and fruits; without him we shall wither; we shall desert the city and accompany Rama like Lakshmana; let rats run in the streets of Ayodhya; let us make Rama's forest a city and Kaikeyi's city a wilderness." These words fell on Rama's ears but did not alter his mind. While everybody around was looking miserable, Rama passed them with a smile and asked Sumantra to announce them to the King. Dasaratha ran to receive Rama but fell before reaching him; Rama lifted up his father and asked him to give them leave. Dasaratha said: "I am bewildered; restrain me, and yourself assume the kingship of Ayodhya." "I shall not be responsible for your falsehood; let me therefore go to the forest," said Rama. "Your going is not to my liking; I have been deceived by this cunning woman; would you not stay for a day?" asked the father. "The merit that I earn by going today, who will give that if I go tomorrow? I, therefore, desire to depart by all means from this place. I desire not kingdom, happiness or anything, I only desire that your truthfulness should be protected; a father is like a good; and it is as a divine command that your word shall be obeyed by me," replied Rama. Dasaratha embraced Rama and forgot himself for a while.

The scene was too much for old Sumantra to bear;

he enjoyed a high status and knew the antecedents of every person well; he wrung his palms, gnashed his teeth and, appearing to gore Kaikeyi with the shafts of his words, denounced her as the murderer of her husband. He himself threatened to accompany Rama.

Dasaratha then proposed that a long retinue with ample wealth and materials of comfort and luxury should be sent with the sons and Kaikeyi protested that the King was trying to bequeath an empty city to her son. Dasaratha could not endure this and he cried out: "You have yoked me to an unholy task, and even as I am dragging the load, you are piercing me with the goad, ignoble woman!" Retorting with twice the King's anger, Kaikeyi reminded him of his ancestor Sagara and the banishment of his eldest son Asamanja.[1] The reference was most repugnant to everyone present and the old minister Siddhartha rebuked her for the insulting comparison. Rama quietened them all by telling the King that for one who was abandoning all enjoyment to go to the forest and live on what was available there, there was no need for the retinue, and that bark garments, pickaxe and basket were all they needed. Thereupon Kaikeyi herself brought the bark garments and, in that assembly, shamelessly ordered Rama to wear them. Sita did not know how to tie this kind of garment and asked Rama to help her. The sight of Sita asking Rama and Rama tying the bark on her was too much even for Vasishtha, who now broke down and reprimanded Kaikeyi: "Evil-minded Kaikeyi, blight of the family, you know no bounds; Sita shall not go; she shall take the throne that is Rama's; the wife is one's own person and, as Rama's self, she shall protect the earth; you may jump into the skies, but Bharata who knows the family

[1] Asamanja was indulging in the cruel sport of snatching children and throwing them into the river; the King banished him from the country.

traditions will hardly take this kingdom."

Taking leave of the heart-broken Dasaratha Rama made a last request of him to be considerate of his mother Kausalya. Dasaratha picked up some strength and asked Sumantra to drive them to the forest and to load the car with ornaments and robes for Sita. As Sita took leave of her mother-in-law, Kausalya complimented her on her exemplary devotion to her husband and commented on the incomparable merit of a wife standing by her husband in weal or woe. Sita replied that she was taught as a girl that a wife apart from her husband was a stringless lyre, a wheel-less chariot, and that son, father, mother, everyone else gave only a little, compared to what the husband gave the woman. The brothers and Sita saluted the parents; Sumitra embraced Lakshmana and told him: "Regard Rama as Dasaratha, Sita as myself and the forest as Ayodhya; now go in peace."

As Sumantra helped them to the chariot and drove away, the whole city, including the women and the aged, ran after Rama, even as the thirsty run after water. They begged Sumantra to drive slowly, but Rama bade him drive fast. Suddenly their attention was drawn to the King and Queen who had run after the chariot and had fallen on the road. Rama was unable to bear the sight and urged Sumantra to greater speed; at the back, however, there were cries from the King and the Queen imploring their son and Sumantra to stop. Between Rama and Dasaratha, Sumantra felt that he was caught between the two wheels of a running chariot. "It is sin to prolong suffering," remarked Rama. The ministers escorted the King home.

The city was plunged in gloom; there was no cooking in any home, nor any business in the city; elephants dropped their feed; cows suckled not their calves; and even a mother delivered of her first male child that day

did not rejoice. Dasaratha did not remove his gaze from the direction of his son's journey till the disappearance of the dust of the chariot; then he fell flat and Kausalya and Kaikeyi supported him on either side; Dasaratha asked the latter not to touch his limbs; "I have abandoned you; let not Bharata, if he takes the kingdom, perform my obsequies," said he to Kaikeyi. As they entered the palace, Dasaratha asked to be taken to Kausalya's abode. At midnight he said to Kausalya, "My sight has gone after Rama and has not yet come back; I am not able to see you; touch me firmly with your hand." Kausalya wept bitterly complaining of her lot. Sumitra consoled her by reminding her of the greatness of her son.

Outside, as Rama was on his way, the citizens running after his chariot appealed to the horses to slow down. Rama turned and saw even Brahmans running after him on foot; he immediately dismounted from the chariot and walked on foot with Sita and Lakshmana. Sitting quietly on their boughs without food, even the birds bewailed Rama who was sympathetic towards all beings; the river Tamasa which lay across their path seemed as if to prevent Rama from departing.

That night they halted on the banks of the Tamasa. Rama decided to take only water that night. A bed of leaves was spread for him. Lakshmana and Sumantra were awake all night. When the sun rose, Rama saw the citizens of Ayodhya who had run after him lying all around and bade Sumantra start. They crossed the Tamasa and Rama directed Sumantra to go a little north and then return so that the people who followed them might not find his route and return home.

The perplexed citizens cursed themselves for having slept and returned to the gloomy capital. Rama had by that time travelled a good distance. As he went, he

heard the denunciation of Kaikeyi by the villagers of the countryside. Crossing the Kosala country, Rama turned towards Ayodhya and took leave of his mother city. He then reached the holy Ganga and her bank studded with hermitages where the place called Sringaberapura stood. They stopped at the foot of a huge tree and were met by the powerful hunter-chief of the place, Guha, who was a beloved friend of Rama. Receiving Rama with his retinue and kinsmen, Guha entreated Rama to accept food. Rama said that though delighted with his reception, he was unable to receive any gift, as he was following the *dharma* of the recluse and that if Guha would feed the horses, which his father loved, he would be satisfied. When Rama rested, Guha went on talking with Lakshmana and Sumantra. Guha requested Lakshmana to sleep, promising that he himself would stand guard over Rama; but how could Lakshmana sleep? As they stood, sorrowing over the turn of events, the night passed.

Next morning on Rama's bidding, Guha brought a well-furnished boat to cross the Ganga. Sumantra wept and told Rama: "How could I go back with an empty chariot? Seeing my chariot without you, the city will be torn in sorrow; even my horses may refuse to drag it; if you abandon me I shall enter fire along with it; take me and I shall be of service to you." As Sumantra spoke in this strain, Rama pointed out to him that so long as he did not return, Kaikeyi would not believe that he, Rama, had gone into the forest and would impute motives and designs to the poor King. "So, for my sake and for the King's you must, with this chariot, return home," said he. After consoling Sumantra, Rama told Guha, "Guha, this place is inhabited; I cannot live here; I shall have to live in a hermitage; bring me the sap of the banyan tree. With that sap Rama and Lakshmana twisted their hair into matted locks and assumed the

appearance of sages. Then Rama purified himself in the waters of the Ganga and meditated, and as the three then crossed the Ganga, Sita prayed to the celestial river that her lord might be enabled to fulfil his vow of forest life and return safely. Disembarking on the farther shore, Rama told Lakshmana: "Take care, whether we go to populous places or lonely ones, you go in advance; let Sita follow you; I shall bring up the rear, protecting both you and Sita." On the other shore Sumantra stayed gazing at their vanishing figures as long as they were in sight. Rama halted for the night at the foot of a tree and expatiating upon the cruelty of Kaikeyi and the further possibility of trouble to Dasaratha and Kausalya, Rama made one more futile attempt to persuade Lakshmana to return to Ayodhya.

Next morning they entered the forest and reached the holy place where the Yamuna joined the Ganga. "Lakshmana, see yonder, the sacred Prayaga[1]; that is the smoke from sage Bharadvaja's hermitage and you hear the roar of the mingling currents." So saying, Rama went to Bharadvaja's hermitage, saluted the renowned sage and asked; "Kindly tell us of a secluded place for a hermitage." "Ten *krosas*[2] from here is the beautiful mountain *Chitrakuta*; when one sights the summits of Chitrakuta, one's mind thinks of good things and becomes rid of all evil; there many sages have done penance and attained heaven; that is a secluded place for your comfortable stay; but you may as well stay with me," said Bharadvaja. After spending the night there with Bharadvaja, they crossed the Yamuna, and Sita prayed to that river that her husband might be enabled to fulfil his vow. Sita asked the name of every new tree, shrub and creeper that they passed by, and Rama asked Lakshmana to give Sita whatever she was curious about or

[1] The present Allahabad.

[2] A *krosa* equals two miles.

liked. Next morning they reached Chitrakuta. At Rama's bidding, Lakshmana improvised a hut, and they set everything in order in that sylvan home.

The Passing Away of Dasaratha

Sumantra returned to a cheerless, empty, silent Ayodhya. The citizens mobbed him, asking him where Rama was and he hid his face as he drove along the royal highway. When he delivered Rama's message to Dasaratha, the King silently listened, uttered a cry, and fell down.

On the sixth night after Rama's departure, Dasaratha recapitulated at dead of night, a sin that he had committed of yore; he told Kausalya: "You were not yet married to me; I then was crown prince; the rains came, making my spirits ebullient; setting my mind on game, I went down to the Sarayu to shoot buffalos, elephants and other animals that came to drink water there; you know, I could shoot without seeing the target, taking a sure aim merely by the sound; in the darkness I heard a sound that was like the noise of an elephant drinking water and I shot. Alas! a human voice cried out in distress; a recluse had been shot by me! He was the son of a very old blind pair in a hermitage nearby; when I went to reveal to them my cruel act and beg their pardon, the old parent, who was about to die of the shock, laid on me the curse that I too would pass away like him sorrowing for my son. Now, Kausalya, the messengers of Death are at hand; the light is fading; Kausalya and Sumitra! am dying, Kaikeyi, the blight of the family!"

The morning saw the King dead. There was great wailing and abuse of Kaikeyi. The ministers removed the Queen, and placed the King's body in a tub filled with oil to preserve the body till the arrival of his son. The counsellors who were king-makers feared the end-

less harm of anarchy, and desired that one of the Ikshvakus should be crowned king; otherwise the rule of the jungle would follow, the more powerful devouring the less powerful.

BHARATA

Vasishtha ordered fleet messengers to be despatched and Bharata to be brought along with Satrughna. The messengers sped on their horses westward and almost in an exhausted condition, reached Girivraja, the Kekaya capital.

The same night as the messengers entered the city, Bharata had a bad dream, and in the morning, nothing, no entertainment could drive away his melancholy. Then he revealed to his friends that he saw his father in inauspicious situations which portended death. Even as Bharata was recounting his dream, the messengers arrived and delivered Vasishtha's message that he desired to see Bharata on urgent business. Bharata asked: "Is the King well? Are Rama and Lakshmana well? Is the virtuous Kausalya doing well? Is Sumitra well? And how is she, that selfish, severe, irate, presumptuous mother of mine, Kaikeyi?" "All well, Prince, the goddess of prosperity seeks you; start the chariot," said the messengers. Bharata took leave of his mother's father Asvapati, and left. Spending seven nights *en route*, Bharata reached Ayodhya. The absence of the usual sights and sounds of happiness and joy roused apprehension in him. As he entered deeper into the city, he noticed definite signs of some calamity having occurred, for even temples had suspended services.

Bharata went straight to his father's palace and not finding him there, went to his mother's palace. Kaikeyi embraced him, took him on her lap and began to enquire of welfare in the Kekaya country. Bharata cut it all short and asked why her couch was empty and

why the people about them were cheerless. "Father remains mostly with you?" asked Bharata. "The King has attained the state that all beings attain," replied Kaikeyi. Bharata cried, throwing up his arms in anguish, and fell; he covered his face and wailed. "When I heard the message, I imagined Rama was to be crowned; it is all the other way about. Of what malady did the King die? Now announce me to him who is my next father, my eldest brother, of whom I am the servant. What was the King's last message?" Kaikeyi answered: "Crying 'Rama,' 'Sita,' 'Lakshmana' the King died." "Where then are they now?" asked Bharata. Kaikeyi began telling Bharata the whole story which she imagined would please her son. "Why was Rama sent to the Dandaka forest? Did he kill a child? Did he steal a Brahman's possessions? Did he punish an innocent person? Did the Prince desire the woman of anybody?" The mother replied: "Rama punished not the innocent; Rama stole not a Brahman's wealth; others' women, Rama does not even lift his eyes to see. I heard of Rama's proposed coronation, asked of the father this kingdom for you and the banishment of Rama; your father did it but owing to his exceeding love for Rama died on the latter's departure. Now take the kingdom; it is for you that I have done all this." Bharata closed his ears with his palms as his mother spoke, and told her: "With my father dead and brother in exile, what shall I do with this kingdom? The King did not know he was embracing in you, live coals; how did you imagine that I could bear this royal burden borne by Dasaratha? Even if I could, I shall not bear it to spite you. Were it not for Rama's displeasure, I would abandon you; he looks upon you too as a mother; I shall not only bring Rama from the forest but make myself his servant. You will not reach the world of my father in heaven; King Asvapati bred not a daughter but a fiend; do you realise the ex-

tent of the violence you have done to Kausalya by this act against her son?" The loud manner in which, in open and in the midst of the ministers, Bharata was decrying his mother intimated his arrival to Kausalya who wanted to meet him. When Kausalya spoke as if he were a party to Kaikeyi's infamous act, he felt that Kausalya was probing his wound with a needle. He loudly protested and swearing that the evil of every kind of sin should be upon his head if he were a party to the crime of Rama's exile, fell exhausted at Kausalya's feet. Kausalya consoled him as he protested. "My child! You have really sustained my departing breath; you shall attain the worlds of the good and truthful ones," consoled Kausalya.

Bharata performed the obsequies of his dead father in a fitting manner. The ten days' pollution passed; the rites of the twelfth day were over and lavish gifts were made for the repose of the King's soul. In the thirteenth day's ceremony when he had to collect the bones of his father, Bharata broke down remembering his father's affectionate acts. Vasishtha, the learned teacher, reminded Bharata: "Three pairs here, hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, birth and death, hold sway over all without exception; in this unavoidable matter, you should not grieve thus."

As they returned, the hunchback Manthara was seen decked in all her ornaments, looking like a dressed-up monkey. As the servants seized her, she raised an alarm; Satrughna dragged her along but Bharata told his brother not to ill-treat a woman. "Behold, Satrughna, if I could, I would kill this mother of mine; but Rama would then hate me."

The fourteenth day saw the king-makers, ministers and guilds gathered to offer the throne to Bharata. Bharata quietly came round the things collected for the ceremony and said: "The eldest should be King; let our

fourfold army start. I shall bring back Rama from the forest; let artisans and workers go ahead laying the road." An army of workers, carpenters, well-sinkers, bamboo-workers and mechanical craftsmen went in advance making preparations for the journey, laying and levelling the road and erecting camps, parks and rest-houses all along the route.

Bharata started in the chariot; on horses and in chariots, ministers and priests went ahead; thousands of elephants, horses and footmen followed him. All three Queens mounted one vehicle and went with joy of bringing Rama back. Men, merchants, traders, vendors, entertainers and Brahmans went in bullock-carts. At Sringaberapura, Guha's abode, Bharata halted desiring to offer the holy water of the Ganga to his father. Guha, who saw the huge army and recognised Bharata in the chariot, suspected that he might have started to attack and kill Rama. Collecting his men and taking presents and offerings, Guha waited upon Bharata. Bharata asked him the direction to reach Bharadvaja's hermitage. Guha, in his unbounded love and anxiety for Rama, said: "My men and I too will follow you; but tell me, have you come with any evil intentions towards Rama? The size of your army makes me suspicious." The pure Bharata cursed himself that Guha should thus suspect him and said: "I say this in truth, Guha. I am going to bring Rama back." Guha replied: "You are blessed in all the world, for you have renounced a kingdom that came to you without effort." As they went on talking, night fell. Guha then showed where Rama had sat, and where he had laid himself down to sleep, all of which Bharata saw with tear-stained eyes, now bemoaning the fate that had overtaken Rama and Lakshmana and now praising Lakshmana, who had spent the whole night there on his feet. In the morning Guha ordered a large number of boats and they crossed the Ganga. With Vasishtha, Bharata

called on Bharadvaja; Bharadvaja too asked Bharata to declare his intention in marching out in this way, confessing to a suspicion in his heart too. Bharata declared his purpose and requested news of Rama's whereabouts. The sage gave the information but proposed that Bharata should wait until the next day. The sage then arranged for Bharata and his vast retinue the most lavish dinner imaginable, for which the whole heavenly world was indented for assistance, and which the sage obviously intended as a means of testing how far Bharata's mind was attached to luxury and enjoyment and how far his profession of devotion to Rama was genuine. Bharata stood the test, for when sitting down to the dinner, he left the main seat empty in the name of Rama, worshipped it and he himself not only took a minister's place, but held the fly-whisk to signify his inferior position. Next morning Bharata came to Bharadvaja and requested him to bless his mission to Rama. As he was about to depart and the Queens came to take their leave, Bharadvaja submitted Bharata to a further test; he asked Bharata to introduce his mothers one by one; Kausalya and Sumitra, Bharata described in glowing terms, and he denounced his mother as the root of all that great calamity. Bharadvaja thereupon consoled the agitated Bharata by saying that Rama's exile would eventually bear a good result and that he should not accuse his mother Kaikeyi any further. Then the whole army turned south and began moving like a huge cloud that would spread over one whole side of the sky. They reached mount Chitrakuta and a column of smoke rising from the grove of trees bespoke habitation. Bharata halted the retinue at a distance and went on with Sumantra and Vasishtha.

At Chitrakuta Rama was enjoying his stay with Sita, showing her the many beautiful trees and flowers and the attractions of the hill. From the hill Rama took

her down to the river Mandakini flowing to the north of the hill and said: "We shall bathe here; Sita, take to Mandakini as to a friend; take the wild beings as citizens, this hill as Ayodhya and this river as Sarayu herself; with obedient Lakshmana and you, bathing thrice, tasting honey, roots and fruits, I certainly long neither for Ayodhya nor for a kingdom."

Just then arose the dust and din of the approaching army and the animals scattered in all directions in fright. "A king or one like a king has come to hunt or some wild beast is wreaking some havoc; look, Lakshmana," observed Rama. Lakshmana climbed up a tree in haste and told Rama: "Extinguish the fire; let Sita hide in the cave; string your bow and put on your armour; an army is approaching." "Look, whose army do you think it is likely to be?" said Rama. Lakshmana said, spitting fire as it were: "The son of Kaikeyi, Bharata, is coming to kill us; the standard on the chariot shows it clearly; I shall kill him; I shall kill also Kaikeyi along with her kith and kin; let the earth be rid of this stain." Rama then said, pacifying his agitated brother: "Of what use is bow or sword when that great man of knowledge Bharata has himself come? Having promised father to remain in exile, what would you do with that kingdom with a stain after having killed Bharata? Anything gained by the ruin of those near and dear, I eschew as I would poisoned food. I assure you in truth, everything good and desirable including this earth I desire not for me, but for the sake of those like you. Lakshmana, this earth, encircled by sea, is not difficult for me to acquire, but even Indra's place I desire not by unrighteousness. Methinks, Bharata having heard everything on his arrival at Ayodhya, has come to see us with a heart full of love and sorrow. He has obviously denounced mother Kaikeyi, pacified father, and has come to offer me the kingdom. He will not do any-

thing against us. Has he ever done anything against us so far that you should suspect him now? If you say anything harsh against Bharata, I will take it as said against me. Whatever the extreme situation, how could sons kill their father, or a brother his brother, his own life? If you speak thus, I shall ask Bharata to give the kingdom to you and he will give it." Lakshmana had no self-interest, nor did Rama say anything not consistent with *dharma*; mother or brother, Rama was always alert to remind that person of the proper position regarding *dharma,* when he found that person transgressing the bounds of *dharma*. Rama's words went home and Lakshmana shrank within himself and said: "Yes, methinks father himself is coming." "It is possible," said Rama, "he might come just to see us or take us back or at least take Sita back. That fine equestrian pair yonder is father's; that elephant, yonder, is surely Satrunjaya of our old father; but the white parasol of the King is missing, and that throws me in doubt; come down now from the tree top."

Having encamped his army at a distance, Bharata came on foot. He ordered his men to go around and find out the exact residence of Rama: "Till I find Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, I will have no peace; till I take Rama's feet on my head, I will have no peace; till I see his head wet with the coronation bath, I will have no peace." So saying, Bharata entered the grove. The sylvan abode of Rama came into view, and also signs of life; strips of their rough garments had been tied high on trees to show the route to Lakshmana when he went out at odd hours; swords, armour and bows were hung up; the fire altar was visible; then Bharata saw Rama himself sitting in the hut, with matted locks, deerskin and bark-garments, like God Brahma himself. Bharata ran up and fell crying, before he could reach Rama's feet. He called out the name of his elder brother and

could say no more. Rama lifted him, embraced him, took him on his own lap. Taking him as King, Rama made a detailed enquiry about every department of the state administration and every part of Bharata's behaviour as it ought to be. Bharata bore the long political discourse in the form of questions and replied: "I have fallen off the standard of common virtue, and what shall I do with kingly virtue? It is our long-standing principle that when the eldest is alive, the younger brother is never the King; therefore, come back and crown yourself; while I was at Kekaya and you in the forest here, father attained heaven." Rama, Lakshmana and Sita wept on hearing the news of Dasaratha's death; Rama praised Bharata on his good fortune in having been able to perform the last rites of their father. Rama and Lakshmana then went to the Mandakini, bathed, and offered water and oblation to the spirit of their father. When they returned from the river, the whole crowd from Ayodhya had entered the hermitage to see the meeting of the brothers and their sorrow over their father's death.

Then Rama asked Bharata the reason for his visit. Bharata said that everybody wanted Rama's return to Ayodhya and his coronation as King. Rama replied that he could not do a sinful act for the sake of a kingdom; that Bharata was not to be blamed, nor should Bharata denounce his mother. When they reassembled next day, Bharata raised a new point: "Kaikeyi is appeased; what has been given to me, I give again to you; this is too heavy a burden for me to bear; your failure to take the crown is like a tree to whose fruit everybody had been looking forward, failing in its season." Rama now expatiated upon Fate and the inexorable rigour in which men and things are held by it; "Man cannot do as he pleases; he is not his own master; fate drags him this way and that; all acquisition ends in loss, all rise in

fall, all union in separation, all life in death; bodies become infirm by age like buildings; night passes like a flood and returns not; as man sits or moves, death is always with him; every sunrise and every fresh season which we greet takes away a part of our life; beings come together and separate in life as logs of wood on the waves of the sea; one cannot wait for another, even as a caravan cannot stop for a wayfarer; our father has lived a righteous life and has attained heaven; we need not grieve over him as he has laid down here his decrepit body and taken a divine status and is enjoying the freedom of heaven; wise and firm men ought not to grieve; therefore, go back to Ayodhya and rule; so has father enjoined; and what he has ordained me to do, I shall do." Bharata extolled Rama for the philosophical heights to which he could soar, leaving below the afflictions of pain or the elations of pleasure; he could have accepted Rama's emphasis on their father's command if that command had issued forth properly; the father himself, Bharata contended, did a despicable act under pressure from a woman, who but for her being a mother, would have been slain; and the wrong of a father was to be set right by the son; in fact, Rama's return would save the good name of father, mother and himself. Protection of the people was the obvious duty laid on Rama as a prince and how could he give up that certain duty for some undefined doubtful future merit? If Rama wanted to lead a life of penance, what greater penance could there be than the looking after the people; a householder's life had been held to be the best and how could Rama ignore it? Bharata went on advancing this argument and the citizens praised him. But Rama now silenced him by revealing something which had not so far been mentioned by anybody: when Dasaratha married Kaikeyi, he promised, as the dowry of the marriage, that the kingdom would pass to her son.

One of the counsellors, sage Jabali, tried to use materialistic arguments to see if Rama could somehow be induced to return; Rama repudiated those arguments and defined his own position: "Character alone reveals a man; Truth and kindness form the eternal principles of kingly conduct; the State embodies Truth; the world is based on Truth; Truth is all in all; prosperity goes only with Truth; there is nothing greater than Truth; not out of avarice, not out of delusion, not out of ignorance, will I break the bounds of Truth; that policy which the low, the cruel, the avaricious and the criminal resort to, I shun as vice in the cloak of virtue. *With my five senses contented, I lead my life in this world, without deceit, with faith in values and with competence to distinguish right and wrong.*" As Rama waxed eloquent, Jabali hastened to dispel the impression that he had spoken any heresy and to point out that he was only anxious that Rama should return. Vasishtha too noticed the heat in Rama's reply and after explaining Jabali's real motive, tried his own method on Rama; Vasishtha expounded the origin of the world and the history of the whole Ikshvaku dynasty, dwelling on the fact that in every reign the eldest son had succeeded. He also added that a teacher who imparted knowledge was superior to father and mother and as such he would request Rama to return to Ayodhya. Rama could not bear to be told that, for he reminded the teacher that what a father or mother did for a child, in things small and great, could never be repaid. Bharata then called upon Sumantra to spread sacred grass on the ground so that he might fast till Rama complied. Rama, the foremost royal sage, told Bharata: "A fast is held against somebody to prevent him from wrong-doing; against what act of mine are you thus fasting? And it is for Brahmans that this method had been sanctioned, not for kings." Bharata then glanced at the citizens gathered there and asked them

why they did not advise Rama to do the proper thing. They replied that what Rama said was just and they could not contradict him. Rama then asked Bharata to note what they said, arise and purify himself by touching him and water. Bharata now saw another way out and said: "A father's words have to be carried out on the whole; let me stay in the forest, and let Rama occupy the throne." Rama was surprised at this, and looking up at the citizens, pointed out that such an exchange or proxy was not possible in a duty that one had to discharge. The scene was a thrilling one for the sages of the forest who praised both the great souls and congratulated the father who could boast of such sons; they, however, asked Bharata to accept Rama's word and thereby to ensure his father's future in heaven. Bharata had now only one resort; he fell at Rama's feet and begged him most ardently. Rama lifted him up and said: "The sea will overflow its shores before I transgress a promise given to my father." Then an idea occurred to him and Vasishtha appears to have suggested the way out of the impasse; Bharata asked Rama to put on his sandals and give them to him as his representative for the task of safeguarding the prosperity and security of the world. Rama put on the sandals and then gave the sandals to Bharata. "For fourteen years I shall wear matted locks and mendicant's dress, live on fruits and roots only, and dwell outside the city; the kingly authority will be vested in these sandals; I will be expecting your arrival at the end of fourteen years; if I do not see you then, I shall mount the funeral pyre." "So be it," promised Rama, who embraced Bharata and Satrughna and asked Bharata that he should lay aside his anger and protect his mother.

Receiving Bharadvaja's approbation *en route,* Bharata then reached the city, and after the Queen Mothers had retired to their apartments, Bharata informed his

elders that he proposed to stay at Nandigrama on the outskirts of the city. As he went with his brother's sandals, the whole state-paraphernalia accompanied him. Offering the kingdom to them, Bharata anointed the sandals and as their agent he carried out his duties; whatever matter of state or costly present came, Bharata first dedicated it to the sandals and then did what was needed.

THE RAKSHASAS

After Bharata's departure, Rama found the sages of Chitrakuta somewhat restless and when Rama anxiously enquired of them, to assure himself that he, his brother or his wife had shown them no offence, the head of the hermitage replied: "Your persence here has been discovered by demons; there is at the place called Janasthana the demon Khara, brother of Ravana; he wants to attack you; since you came here, the demons have started harassing the hermits; we therefore propose to depart to a different hermitage, and before Khara attacks, you will also do well to go elsewhere." Rama did not leave the place with them; but other considerations weighed with him in deciding to leave that place and go further south into the forests. The army of Bharata had laid waste much of the place and, more than that, the memory of Bharata would haunt him there. So Rama started out.

The first sage whom Rama visited was Atri. Atri's wife was the renowned Anasuya who bore a truly noble name[1] and had wrought various miracles by virtue of her exemplary character and penance; Sita prostrated herself before her; Anasuya complimented her on following her husband to the forest with such devotion and spoke of the unique glory of the character of a chaste wife

[1] It means "one free from all envy."

who had identified herself with her lord. Sita then spoke very eloquently on the same high theme: "Even if my husband were without merit, I should serve him single-mindedly; but I have found in him one who is praiseworthy in all respects, endowed with sympathy, controlled in senses, constant in love, righteous and affectionate like a father and mother; my mother had taught me these things at the time of my marriage and my mother-in-law had likewise told me about them. Now you have reinforced the same teachings." Pleased with Sita, Anasuya then gave her a celestial garland, garments, ornaments and sandal paste. The sage lady then desired to hear from Sita's own mouth the story of her marriage and her wedded bliss. Rama and Sita, the latter charming in the robes and decorations and fragrant with the sandal paste given by Anasuya, spent the night there, and on the morning started on their journey into the southern forest.

ARANYA KANDA (THE FORESTS)

Grant of Security to the Hermits

Entering the great Dandaka forest, Rama saw a congregation of hermits. As they looked at Rama, the build of his body, beauty, grace, and indeed the guise of the hermit which he had taken, they were wonder-struck. After receiving Rama, they represented to him: "You are the guardian of *dharma*; you are our refuge; we are hermits who have abjured the punitive role, having subdued our senses and anger; our wealth is penance; like the child in the womb, we must be carefully protected."

The Slaying of Viradha

Soon after this conversation with the hermits, a demon named Viradha appeared; he had been living on the flesh of the hermits in that part of the forest; he snatched up Sita; this was the first Rakshasa that Rama

had met after his arrival in the forest, the first abduction of Sita and the first of the dangers and humiliations to which they were exposed in that demon-haunted forest. Nothing was more distressing to Rama than to witness an act of violence to Sita, and he inveighed against Kaikeyi. When the demon was challenged by the brothers, he dropped Sita and seized them both in his arms. The brothers cut off his arms, and tried to kill him. Viradha then revealed himself as the Gandharva named Tumburu, showed Rama the way to reach the sage Sarabhanga and requested the brothers to bury his own body.

Sage Sarabhanga, who was awaiting Rama's arrival to leave for heaven in Indra's chariot, directed Rama to the sage Sutikshna. Rama came to Sutikshna and spent the night with him. Next morning Sita brought the brothers their bows, quivers and arms and they took their departure. As they were going, Sita made one of her sweetest addresses to Rama; she told him in pleasing, endearing words: "Rama, there are three heinous crimes born of desire,—uttering a lie, violating another's wife and wanton violence; of these you never speak a lie and wherefore should you desire another's wife? But the third terrible thing, taking away others' lives without cause, that has now come to you. You have promised the sages of Dandaka Forest to kill the demons in battle; and it is said that you have entered the Dandaka for that very purpose; I do not like entering the Dandaka; the association with a weapon is like the playing with fire, always resulting in violence and destruction; of this I remind you in love and esteem; I do not teach you; you may take up weapons after returning to Ayodhya; here, in the forest, be like the sages and observe *dharma*." Rama commended Sita on her sweet and appropriate words, and replied: "Warriors bear arms so that there may be no cry from the helpless; and these sages have taken refuge in me; they are in distress, being devoured by demons;

and I promised to help them; I would rather give up my life or you with Lakshmana than my word to these Brahmans; even if I had not been told, I should protect them; more so, when I have been requested and I have promised; you have however told me this in love and I am glad you spoke out like that; it is befitting yourself and your pedigree and your true companionship to me in my discharge of duties."

SAGE AGASTYA

They proceeded, first Rama, next Sita and Lakshmana last, seeing the flowers and wild creatures of the forest. Thence they went to the hermitage of the brother of Agastya; and then to that of Agastya. Rama told Lakshmana of Agastya's exploits and greatness and how the whole southern quarter[1] came to bear his blessed name. Rama said: "In this hermitage of Agastya, no liar, no cruel person, no rogue, no unkind or lustful man can live; such is the power of this sage." Agastya presented Rama with a bow which belonged to Vishnu himself, an arrow given by Brahma, two quivers of inexhaustible arrows given by Indra, and a sword. Next day Rama sat down before him and Agastya congratulated him on successfully fulfilling his father's words; for by now the period of exile had almost passed. Rama then asked the sage about how that part of the country had been made habitable, and Agastya narrated briefly the story of Dandaka, of Rama's own line, and how it had been an impenetrable forest when he first came down from the Himalayas. Agastya added: "Ever since you set foot at Chitrakuta, Rakshasas have been harassing the hermits; you should afford security to the sages; you must protect us all. Two *yojanas*[2] from here is Panchavati[3] full of deer; nearby is the Godavari, and Sita will

[1] Agastya is also the southern star Canopus.

[2] *Yojana*—8 or 9 miles.

[3] Panchavati—the place of five banyan trees.

enjoy it very much; you can set up your hermitage there; you have spent the major part of the stipulated period; after completing it, you will go back and live happily in your kingdom."

Thus did they come to Panchavati. There they met a huge vulture on one of the banyan trees and mistook it for a demon; the vulture greeted them like a father and described itself as Jatayus, a friend of their father Dasaratha, and younger brother of Sampati and son of Aruna, the brother of the divine bird Garuda himself. Jatayus offered to be their guard at Panchavati and to protect Sita. At Rama's bidding Lakshmana erected a beautiful hermitage, provided with all comforts; highly pleased at Lakshmana's work, Rama embraced him, and mentioning the care, attention and imagination Lakshmana bestowed on his comfort, he said that in Lakshmana he had his own father alive.

Surpanakha and the Destruction of Fourteen Thousand Rakshasas

The three lived happily at Panchavati. Autumn passed; the cold season came; as they went down early one morning to the Godavari to bathe, Lakshmana was reminded of Bharata's going to the Sarayu in the same manner and praised the way he was following Rama's way of life. Rama said that firm and resolute as his mind was on the forest life, yet the thoughts of Bharata shook his resolve and filled him with nostalgia. When they had finished their bath, the three shone like the Lord of destruction Rudra Himself, Parvati His consort and Nandin His attendant.

They returned to the hut and sat there recounting many stories. By chance there came to that place a fiend named Surpanakha,[1] the sister of the ten-headed Ravana. That hideous monster fell in love with that most charm-

[1] Surpanakha—one with nails as large as winnowing baskets.

ing man, Rama. She said to Rama: "You must have heard about Ravana, powerful son of Visravas, of his brother Kumbhakarna, who goes into long sleep, of his righteous brother Vibhishana whose conduct is different from that of the Rakshasas, and of the other two brothers, Khara and Dushana; I am their sister, Surpanakha by name, capable of taking any form I please. I have come to you in love, desiring you, excellent man! for my husband; I am possessed of great powers; what can you do with this ugly Sita? I shall devour her as well as this brother of yours; then we two shall be free to roam about together."

Rama was amused and he was bent on further amusement at her expense; so he told her: "I have a wife, and for women like you, a rival is intolerable; here is my younger brother, handsome and a fit husband for you; he has no wife; take him." Thereupon she came to Lakshmana, who said that since he was Rama's servant, she would become only a servant if she chose him; and in the same jesting mood as Rama, suggested that she should become the elder brother's younger wife, promising her that Rama would certainly prefer her to his old and ugly Sita. Unconscious of their mockery, Surpanakha came back to Rama, eager to devour Sita. When she was about to attack Sita, Rama told Lakshmana that they should not jest with the cruel and the mean and bade him mutilate her. Lakshmana drew his sword and cut off her nose and her ear. With a terrible roar and pouring blood, Surpanakha ran to her brother Khara at Janasthana. Khara despatched fourteen of his Rakshasas to kill the intruders and bring him their blood. Rama killed them. Khara was infuriated, and ordered his commander Dushana to march with his fourteen thousand warriors.

As the fourteen thousand moved from Janasthana to Panchavati, evil omens appeared. Rama told Lakshmana: "Bow in hand, take Sita into the cave; do not

disobey; tarry not; I myself desire to account for all these demons." Lakshmana obeyed. Rama looked like the Lord of destruction in anger. The thrilling battle began. Rama uttered a frightful shout, and aimed at them the divine Gandharva missile; he rained arrows so fast that the Rakshasas could not see him taking out the arrows or aiming them; they only saw him shooting them. The main hosts were destroyed by Rama; the leaders rushed at him one after another and fell. Khara, King of Janasthana, alone remained and Rama at last slew him too and that holocaust of fourteen thousand demons was achieved by Rama in but one and a half *muhurtas*;[1] as Rama entered the hermitage to receive the congratulations of the sages, Sita embraced him ecstatically again and again.

RAVANA

Akampana, a Rakshasa, ran to Lanka and informed Ravana of the slaughter at Janasthana. Akampana gave an account of Rama and Lakshmana, their beauty and valour, and the marvellous battle in which a single hero, Rama, alone, had accounted for fourteen thousand; in whatever direction a Rakshasa turned, there he saw Rama; the arrows fell, hissed like five-hooded serpents and devoured the hosts of Khara. Ravana swore that he would immediately proceed to Janasthana and kill Rama, upon which Akampana said: "Ravana, be assured that you will never vanquish Rama in open battle; all the gods and demons put together cannot subdue him; he can bring down the heavens, uplift the earth, flood it, destroy creation and bring it into being again. I shall therefore tell you the sole means to adopt against him: Rama has a gem of a woman as his wife, Sita, in the flower of youth; carry off Rama's wife, and separated from her, he will not survive." The plan appealed to Ravana and he rode in his chariot to the hermitage of

[1] *Muhurta*—48 minutes.

Tataka's son, Maricha. Maricha said that his sudden arrival aroused his suspicion. Ravana said: "My outpost, the indestructible Janasthana, has been completely destroyed by Rama. Help me to abduct Rama's wife!" Maricha asked which enemy in the form of a friend had come to him and spoken of Sita: he said: "I beseech you, O King of the Rakshasas, calm yourself, return to Lanka; delight in your own wife; leave Rama to himself in the forest."

Maricha succeeded in sending Ravana back to his home. Unfortunately Ravana's sister, with her disfigured face, soon arrived in Lanka. Surpanakha saw her brother sitting on his throne, the formidable Ravana, the destroyer of the gods, the uprooter of *dharma* and the violator of others' women, he who had, by boon of penance, saved himself from death except at human hands, harsh, devoid of sympathy, intent on harming people, one who made the whole world cry in pain.[1] His sister flew into a fury and condemned her brother's incompetence, failure to employ proper spies and foresee the dangers to which he was exposed. Describing Rama's personality, its charm as well as its prowess, she said: "I did not see him taking or aiming his arrows; I saw only rank after rank of our forces falling; it was as if hailstones flattened out a cornfield; he did it all in one and a half *muhurtas*, assured safety to all the sages and made the whole Dandaka region secure for them; I was spared because of my sex; Rama is not alone; he has as his right arm his younger brother Lakshmana, a furious, invincible, powerful warrior. Rama has a wife, who shines there in all her impeccable beauty like a sylvan goddess and the divine Lakshmi herself. He who has her as wife, whom she embraces in joy, that person will excel the whole world and

[1] The name Ravana itself means "one who makes others cry in pain," and is a direct contrast to the name of the hero, Rama meaning "he who delights others."

even the lord of the heavens; she is a fit bride for you, and you a fit husband for her; I tried to bring that paragon of beauty to you and in that attempt, had my nose and ear cut off by the cruel Lakshmana; if you want her as a wife, start now; if you desire the welfare of the Rakshasas, kill Rama and Lakshmana; you can have Sita for yourself; carry her off by force."

Ravana came again to Maricha, and spoke at some length, mentioning lastly his sister's disfigurement and asked for Maricha's help to abduct Rama's wife. Ravana also proposed the ruse to be employed by them: "Maricha, you should go down disguised as a silver-spotted golden deer and frisk about in front of Sita; she would ask Rama to catch this wonder-deer; and as Rama pursues it, I shall carry her off; this will undermine Rama's strength and he will become easy prey to my valour." Astounded at this proposal Maricha said: "King, flatterers with sweet words are many; hard is it to have one who would say what is harsh but wholesome; you have no spies to tell you the true Rama; I pray Rama is not angered lest he should sweep the world clean of Rakshasas; I hope Sita was not born for your death; I hope, having a voluptuary such as you as its King, Lanka will not perish; Rama is in the forest to vindicate the truthfulness of his father's plighted word; he is a good man, one of true valour, an embodiment of *dharma*; you could more easily snatch light from the Sun than Sita from Rama; please do not throw yourself into the fire of Rama; did you confer on this matter with such of your counsellors as are righteous, Vibhishana and the like? Before you do, weigh the good and the bad, and the strength and weakness." Maricha then narrated to Ravana his first-hand knowledge of Rama's prowess, the story of how, in Visvamitra's sacrifice, he fared at the hands of Rama who was only twelve years old at the time. "There is no sin more heinous than laying hands

on the wives of others; go home and revel in your own and save yourself and your people," Maricha said, and then related to him a more recent experience of his after Rama's entry into the Dandaka forest: "The three arrows which he recently shot at me when I went near him as a deer in mischief were such that even today I can see his figure standing near every tree, with bow and arrow, like Death with noose in hand; every word and name beginning with the letter 'R' frightens me." Just as one destined to die does not benefit by the remedies, Ravana did not take Maricha's advice; Ravana spoke harshly to him: "I have not come here to consult you; I have decided; counsellors should not speak so violently to their King. You are to help me here; when you decoy Rama to a distance, call out the names of Sita and Lakshmana, assuming Rama's own voice, so that on hearing it, Lakshmana too will leave Sita; thus shall I capture Sita without a fight; go, I shall follow in my chariot; if you do not go, I shall kill you here and now." Maricha again advised Ravana: "You are no more a King of your subjects than a wolf is a king of sheep; you are not their protector but their death; Rama will kill me, and ere long you too; I shall be glad to die at his hands."

In a short while the two were in the neighbourhood of Rama's hermitage. Maricha turned himself into a golden deer with jewelled horns, a ruby mouth, emerald ears and a diamond belly; he played about Rama's hermitage lighting up the whole place. Sita, who was picking flowers, saw the wonder-deer and called out her husband and brother-in-law. Lakshmana was filled with suspicion and said: "Oh, this is the same Maricha; how can there be a deer of this kind? It is surely a deception." Cutting short Lakshmana's words, Sita said to Rama: "My lord, this is beautiful, please bring it for my amusement; if it can be caught alive, do so; on our return to Ayodhya, it will be an ornament for our private apartments, a

wonder to our people there; if you cannot bring it alive, get its skin at least, I should like it to sit on." Rama too was wonder-struck on seeing the golden deer; he went into extravagant praises of it and said to Lakshmana: "If it is really Maricha, even then it deserves killing; therefore stay here, all alert, and protect Sita at all costs; what we have to do depends on her; I shall kill or bring the deer alive; here with Sita at the hermitage, you must be vigilant; there is Jatayus also; be careful."

With bow, arrow and sword, Rama dashed out. Appearing and disappearing every now and again, jumping up and down, Maricha enticed Rama far from his hermitage. Rama, who was completely deceived by his cunning, shot a terrible arrow at him; Maricha leaped to the height of a palm, fell with a frightful sound, and as he was dying, remembering Ravana's words, shouted in Rama's voice, "Hah! Sita! Hah! Lakshmana!" When Rama heard this false alarm raised by Maricha, he at once thought of Lakshmana's warning; his hair stood on end; fear took possession of him when he thought: "What will Sita and Lakshmana do on hearing this alarm?" Rama hastened towards his hermitage.

When the alarm fell on their ears, Sita asked Lakshmana to go and see what had happened to Rama: "Your brother wants help; hearing his distressed voice, my heart is perturbed; he has fallen into the hands of the Rakshasas," said she. Lakshmana remembered his brother's instructions and stirred not. Sita became distressed at the possibility of Rama dying and spoke angrily. Lakshmana quietly answered: "Who is there among Rakshasas or gods or others to fight against Rama? None can kill him; in Rama's absence, I cannot leave you alone in this forest; your husband will come after killing the deer; it is not his voice; some one has imitated it; you have been placed as a trust under me by Rama; ever since the slaughter of Janasthana, the

Rakshasas have been making all sorts of noises." Lakshmana spoke truly, but Sita grew all the more angry and spoke harsh words, calling him ignoble, merciless, cruel and unworthy of his family. "You have evidently designs on me or you have been suborned by Bharata; these designs will not fructify; having obtained Rama as my husband, how can I desire any ordinary man? Before your very eyes, I shall give up my life." Lakshmana who had controlled his senses folded his hands and said: "Reply is difficult for me; such words are not uncommon among women, Sita! Women are violent and mischievous and create dissensions among men; I am unable to bear these words that fall on my ears like burning metal shafts. Let all the beings of the forest hear this, the righteous person that I am being told unrighteous and harsh words. Shame upon you! You may perish now, you who suspect me in this way. I shall go to where Rama is; may it be well with you! May all the sylvan deities protect you; terrible omens appear; I hope that I shall find you here when I return with Rama!" Sita replied: "Without Rama I shall leap into the Godavari, I shall hang myself or throw myself down from a height, I will take virulent poison or cast myself into the flames, but I will not touch, even with my foot, any other man than Rama." Having thus reproached Lakshmana, Sita hid her face and wept. Lakshmana bowed to her and left, turning back again and again to see if she was safe.

Sita paid, all too soon, for her treatment of Lakshmana. Her needless vaunt that she would not touch another was at once sorely tested. As soon as Lakshmana had departed in search of Rama, Ravana approached, taking the form of a recluse; the unholy person came in a holy garb to Sita who was plunged in sorrow concerning her husband. In his mouth was a Vedic recital, in his heart vile passion, and in that solitude, he addressed Sita, describing the beauty of each limb of hers; he considered

her stay in those surroundings improper and invited her to accompany him; he said that she deserved palaces and luxuries and indeed a better husband. Sita received him with the hospitality due to a recluse. On his query, she narrated her story and enquired who he was: "He who has struck terror in the hearts of all, the King of the Rakshasas, that Ravana, am I." He then opened his heart to her and implored her to go with him to Lanka, his capital, and be his chief queen. Sita flew into a rage and contemptuously replied: "I am the devoted wife of the great Rama of incomparable virtue, of incomparable beauty, the King of men; you cannot touch me; you are evidently seeing your last days; the difference between you and Rama is that between a jackal and a lion." Ravana now adopted a menacing demeanour and boasted of his exploits, his victory over Kubera, his capture of the aerial vehicle (the *Pushpaka Vimana*) that sped at will, the terror in which the whole animate and inanimate world held him and his fabulously rich and beautiful city of Lanka. He asked her why she persisted in remaining with a poor, weak, exiled, mendicant husband. Sita wondered how Ravana mentioned Kubera as his brother and yet stooped to this sinful act. Ravana then struck his palms, abandoned the recluse-guise and assumed his demoniac form, dark like a cloud, with ten faces and twenty arms, and fully armed. He caught her, taking her by the tresses. His magic chariot came and Ravana placed her on it. Sita cried aloud for Rama and Lakshmana. She apostrophised: "O clear-headed Lakshmana, you do not know that I am being carried off by Ravana." She then said to Ravana: "You will reap from this act a terrible calamity ending with your death." She thought also of Kaikeyi and said that she should now be completely satisfied. She addressed the trees of Janasthana, the mountain, the river Godavari, the sylvan deities and the beings, large and small, to inform Rama that she

was being carried off in that manner. She then noticed the vulture Jatayus perched on the tree and implored it to inform Rama.

Jatayus, who was dozing, woke up, saw Ravana and Sita, and pointed out to Ravana the enormity of his crime; Jatayus then swooped down upon him like a mountain-top breaking off. "So long as I live, you shall not take away Sita," so saying old Jatayus, armed with its powerful beak and claws, attacked Ravana, broke his bow and smashed his chariot. With Sita, Ravana jumped to the ground; holding Sita with one arm, he battled with the mammoth bird which was rending him; then Ravana left Sita and smote Jatayus with his fists and feet, severing its wings with his sword. Jatayus fell; Sita ran up to it as to her kinsman, embraced it and wept.

When Ravana snatched Sita again by her tresses, Nature stood breathless, darkness fell and the voice of Brahma pronounced: "The thing has happened," meaning thereby that Ravana had sown the seed of his own destruction. The sages of the forest were between sorrow and joy, sorrow that Sita would be subjected to suffering and joy that thereby Ravana had encompassed his own end. Ravana sped across the sky carrying Sita crying and calling upon Rama and Lakshmana. As she was being borne away, her jewels and ornaments were scattered and fell along the route. The whole world of sentient beings was moaning, "Sita is being carried away by Ravana; there is no righteousness left, no truth, no straightforwardness, no kindness!" Fawns looked up again and again with moist eyes.

Sita heaped curses on Ravana's head and looked all around for help. As she was being taken through the sky by Ravana, she saw on the top of a mountain below five monkey chiefs and to them she threw her silken upper

garment and some ornaments hoping that they would inform Rama; in his haste, Ravana did not see what Sita was doing; those huge monkeys looked up, saw Sita and heard her crying; Ravana crossed Lake Pampa and turned in the direction of Lanka; he crossed hills and streams and finally the ocean, and entered his city taking with him his own death in flesh and blood. Ravana left Sita in his private apartments, instructing his demon attendants to treat her with the utmost care and courtesy and to give her everything she wanted. He saw eight powerful Rakshasas standing there and bade them go to Janasthana, observe the activities of Rama closely, bring him intelligence and make continuous efforts to kill Rama. He took Sita all over his wonderful palace, showing her all the precious things in the foolish hope of tempting her. "Never did Ravana prostrate himself before any woman; here he does to you; yield!" So did he address her in his infatuation. Sita would not talk to him directly, but threw between herself and him a blade of grass and spurned his advances, drawing before his eyes the picture of ruin that awaited him. Ravana finally told her that he would give her a full twelve months to change her mind and threatened that if she did not agree, cooks would dress her for breakfast. He also ordered ogress-guards to break Sita's pride and directed them to take Sita to the park of Asoka trees (*Asokavana*) and there keep her in all safety.

As Rama returned after killing Maricha, the omens were foreboding; Rama imagined the consequences of Maricha's last cry and became anxious about the safety of Sita. On the way, he met Lakshmana; both wore a dejected appearance; Rama blamed Lakshmana for coming away, leaving Sita in a lonely forest infested with Rakshasas. Taking Lakshmana by the hand, Rama said: "O Lakshmana, you have done a reprehensible act in leaving Sita; I have no doubt she has been lost or

eaten." Rama began to lose his self-control and started lamenting: "I hope this calamity will please Kaikeyi; if Sita is not there, I will give up my life." Lakshmana narrated with great difficulty the unhappy circumstances under which he was forced to leave. Rama softly rebuked him, "I am not satisfied with you for leaving the place at the words of an angry woman. You too yielded to anger and disobeyed my command."

They arrived at their hermitage and found it empty. Rama's grief now upset him completely; he ran to trees, from tree to hill, from hill to river, crying out and searching for Sita; he addressed the trees, deer and tigers, and asked if they had seen her; he was like a madman. Rama imagined she was hiding somewhere and appealed to her to show herself. Lakshmana implored Rama not to give way to despair but to search; the forest was vast and had many caves, and Sita was fond of roaming there in it. The two made a wide and minute search. She always enjoyed going to the Godavari to pluck lotuses, so they searched there also. Not finding her, Rama thought of the infamy of having been unable to protect his wife.

They saw some deer which heard Rama's question about Sita's whereabouts and looked to the south. From this Lakshmana said that she must have been taken southwards. Then when they set to work, they saw a trail of flowers dropped by her; Rama saw a hill, asked it about Sita's whereabouts and threatened to reduce it to powder if it did not reply; the poor hill could only echo Rama's question. Suddenly he saw about him on the ground the huge steps of a demon, smaller steps and golden fragments scattered from Sita's garments; he also saw a broken bow, arrows, armour and the fragments of a chariot.

Rama concluded that a Rakshasa had been in pursuit of Sita, that there had been a scuffle and that eventually Sita had been either abducted or devoured.

As that terrible thought overcame him, Rama was beside himself with fury: "Lakshmana, does not virtue protect Sita from being carried off in this great forest? Who in this world dares to do me this wrong? If one is kind, sympathetic and bent on doing good, even if he be the Creator of the worlds himself, the world, out of ignorance, will insult him, taking him to be one of no valour! I shall withdraw my moonlike qualities and shall now blaze with all my scorching effulgence; if the gods do not return Sita intact, I shall destroy the three worlds at once; just as old age, death or fate is irresistible, so am I in anger." It was for Lakshmana now to pacify Rama. With folded hands and parched mouth, Lakshmana pleaded: "You have always been kind, subdued and benevolent to all; you should not become a prey to anger and give up your essential nature; for one man's fault, you cannot destroy the world; look carefully, the signs here are that only one has fought, not two, nor many; you are one who affords security to all beings; who will approve of the loss of your wife? Let us go ahead and search more hills and caves, rivers and lakes; and when our search finally fails, there is time for us to do what is necessary. You ought not to grieve like a common man even if Sita be lost; think calmly; by thinking does one get at good and evil; the enemy is to be found and killed, not the world." Rama accepted Lakshmana's excellent words and the two resumed their search.

There they saw, like the top of a fallen cliff, the huge bird Jatayus, lying bathed in blood. Rama at first took it for a demon and wanted to kill it. As Rama ran up to the bird, the latter spoke with faint words, as its life bled away: "Dear Rama, the lady whom you are searching for here and my life have both been taken by Ravana, in your absence and that of Lakshmana. I found Ravana carrying her off, fought and shattered his chariot and arms, and as I felt the strain of the duel, he

cut off my wings and flew away with Sita; he has slain me, you need not strike again at me." The moment Rama heard these words, he fell on the bird, embraced it, and wept. Turning to Lakshmana, he said: "Loss of kingdom, life in the forest, loss of Sita and now the death of this bird! Oh, my misfortune will burn even fire and dry up even the wide ocean! Here is my father's friend at the point of death as the result of my own bad luck." Rama asked for detailed information and in the faintest tone, the dying Jatayus said: "With Sita, Ravana sped south; but the time when he took her away is called *Vinda,* which means that what one loses then is always regained; he will certainly die, that son of Visravas, the brother of Kubera. . . ." And then, the bird vomited blood and expired. Rama cried: "Go on, speak," but breath had left it. "Behold, Lakshmana, this ancient denizen of Dandaka is now dead on my behalf. Oh, there are good souls everywhere, creatures of virtue, heroic and helpful, even in the animal world. Even the loss of Sita does not pain me so much as the death of Jatayus who is to be revered as father Dasaratha. Lakshmana, bring wood, I shall cremate it with honour." "The worlds to which the performers of sacrifice and gifts go, to them, O King of birds, you go on my word." So saying, Rama cremated the bird as he would his kinsman, offered oblations to its spirit and bathed and poured water for its sake in the Godavari.

The brothers then turned west and walked south and at three *krosas* from Janasthana crossed the Krauncha forest and proceeding further saw a huge demon, Kabandha, who had his head and mouth in his trunk itself, sitting right on the path stretching out on either side his *yojana*-long arms which dragged into his mouth every living thing that moved within their range. Kabandha seized the brothers too; they severed his arms and asked

him who he was and how he came to bear that horrible headless form. Kabandha gave an account of himself and told Rama: "I shall help you with my counsel and give you a friend after you cremate my body. I have divine knowledge, but I can call it up only on the cremation of this accursed demoniac body and the regaining of my old divine form; I am under a curse and my knowledge is in eclipse; I shall tell you of Ravana as also of that righteous and valorous friend who will help you; but I beg you to cremate me before the sun sets."

Sugriva

Accordingly, the brothers lit a pyre and cremated Kabandha. Rising out of his older body and mounting a divine chariot, he said: "Rama, I see no success for you without a friend; on the Risyamuka hill on the banks of the Pampa lake there is the monkey named Sugriva, brother of Valin and driven out by him in anger; there he lives in exile with four companions; that monkey chief is valorous, a keeper of his word, firm and capable; make him your friend with holy fire as witness; he can take any form he pleases; do not slight him, he is a grateful soul, the son of the Sun-god himself; he can search out your Sita whom Ravana has carried away to his abode. Westward along this way is the route past a wood of luscious fruit; you will reach the beautiful lake Pampa, rich in birds and fish; that is the region of the hermitage of sage Matanga; you will find the trees there wreathed in garlands. You will wonder why the hill there is called Malyavat and how the trees are wreathed in garlands; there did the pupils of sage Matanga put forth their strenuous service for their eminent teacher; every drop of sweat that fell from the body of the pupils turned into a garland and hangs with unfaded beauty and fragrance; such is the greatness of service to one's teacher; one of sage Matanga's great pupils, the mendicant-lady Sabari, you will meet there still, waiting to see you before

she ascends to heaven; the wood thereabouts is also known as the forest of Matanga; it is there that Sugriva's hill Risyamuka is situated, a wonderful and holy hill; whatever one sleeping on that hill dreams of, that he will surely receive on waking; no evil-doer, none of perverse character can mount that hill; there dwells Sugriva with four of his friends. Now go. May success attend you." When he had given these instructions, setting forth the details of their further course of action and fixing the exact method and means of search, Kabandha departed.

Turning westward, the brothers reached the banks of Pampa and found Sabari and accepted her homage. With Rama's leave Sabari left her body and ascended to heaven. Having seen the wonderful glories of Matanga's grove, the brothers stepped forward, both of them eager to meet Sugriva, on whom, as Rama said, the search for Sita depended. They bathed in the lake known as Matanga-saras and walked on the ground which the many-coloured flowers fallen from the trees in the neighbourhood of Lake Pampa had converted into a multi-coloured carpet.

KISHKINDHA KANDA (THE KISHKINDHA HILLS)

As they reached the lake, spring was at its height; the water lay like a sheet of beryl, and rows of trees rose there like the slopes of mountains; the wind was playing with boughs in bloom and as it whistled, the bees accompanied it in concert with their sweet hum. It was the season of love, and as Rama saw a pair of peacocks sporting, he was heartbroken by the absence of his beloved Sita. Rama said: "All that was pleasing while she was with me is now distressing to me when she is absent. Lakshmana, return and join Bharata; here, consumed by the loss of Sita, I shall be no more." When the great soul lamented in this pathetic strain, the strong Lakshmana again exerted his clear head and forceful

words to uphold his brother's drooping spirits. "Rama, you King of men! enough of this sorrow; why this miserable feeling in you? None ever found anything without effort; effort is strength; let us find Sita; give up this surrender to the pangs of love; give up this grief; great soul! you do not know your own disciplined self."

Rama regained his fortitude. As the two heroic brothers, armed with bows, approached, Sugriva saw them from the top of the Risyamuka hill and took fright, mistaking them to be the emissaries of Valin. There was a commotion; a council was held and Hanuman, skilled in speech, said to Sugriva: "Drop this suspicion of Valin; this is a portion of Malyavat where that cruel brother of yours dares not enter." Sugriva was not convinced as he said that kings had various kinds of allies and these two finely equipped men might be the agents of their highly resourceful enemy Valin. "Go down now in natural human form and find out from their behaviour and reaction to your talk who they are and why they have come thus into the forest," said Sugriva.

Hanuman took the form of a mendicant and with humility approached the brothers; speaking in exquisite style, he asked them their identity and history. When he found them silent, he revealed his own identity: "I am the messenger of Sugriva, a monkey chief here, disgraced and driven out by his brother Valin and roving the world in sorrow; I am a monkey, Hanuman by name, son of the Wind-god and minister to Sugriva, come at his instance in this guise of a mendicant by virtue of my power to assume any desired form; with you, Sugriva desires friendship." As Hanuman stopped with these words, Rama stood struck with the eloquence, flawlessness and persuasive power of the speech of the messenger. He observed to Lakshmana: "None but one profoundly learned in all the *Vedas* and the entire grammar could

have spoken thus; he has spoken much and has not committed a single blunder, nor shown the slightest grimace on his face or limbs; neither fast nor slow, neither high nor low, neither verbose nor elliptical, he spoke beautifully, carrying your heart with him. Lakshmana, even an enemy who has drawn his destructive sword, would be appeased by this wonderful speech; if a king does not have such a minister, how can his purpose come to fruition?" Thereupon Lakshmana addressed Hanuman: "We have learnt the qualities of Sugriva and are seeking him; as you say you have come from him, we will now do as you say."

Hanuman's thoughts now turned to Sugriva and he concluded that the kingdom would now be his. On Hanuman's enquiry, Lakshmana described Rama's qualities of prowess and truthfulness and as he ended, could not control his poignant reaction to the humiliation of his lord's being forced to seek the assistance of a monkey and exclaimed: "He whose grace the world awaits now awaits the grace of the monkey-chief."

Hanuman abandoned his mendicant form, took his great monkey-shape and carried the two brothers on his shoulders, feeling a thrill in bearing them and bringing them to his master.

Sugriva cast away his fear, took a fine human form and received Rama. "This is an honour and gain for me; here is my hand of friendship, take it, let us come to an understanding," said Sugriva. Rama took Sugriva's hand, and before fire ignited by Hanuman, the two made a sacred pact of friendship and mutual help. Rama said: "From now on, common are our joys and sorrows. Friendship means help; I shall kill Valin who has taken your wife; he is a bad character who is a fit victim of my unfailing arrows." Sugriva responded: "Please do so; by your grace, let me recover my wife and my kingdom; I shall bring back your wife; I am sure that it was Sita

whom we saw the cruel demon carrying off; she was crying, 'Rama,' 'Lakshmana,' trembling in Ravana's grasp; and seeing five of us here on the mountain top, she dropped her upper garment and some jewels." He then hurried into the interior of the cave and brought the articles thrown down by Sita; Rama took them and wept. Rama then asked Lakshmana to see the garment and the ornaments of Sita; Lakshmana said: "I do not know the armlets or her ear rings; her anklets I know, because of my daily prostration at her feet."

Sugriva said: "I am to be congratulated amongst my own people in having an ally from the Ikshvaku house: rich or poor, happy or afflicted, good or bad, a friend is all in all for a man; such is friendship that, for a friend's sake one parts with wealth, happiness and even one's life." "So it is," said Rama, with Lakshmana by his side, and asked Sugriva the story of his feud with his brother.

Sugriva continued: "After our father, we two brothers were quite friendly; Valin was King of Kishkindha and I his devoted servant; then came the demon, Mayavin, son of Dundubhi, with whom my brother had a serious long-standing feud on account of a woman; Mayavin thundered at our gates one midnight and called Valin to come out and fight; Valin issued forth and I too followed out of affection: Mayavin entered a subterranean passage and Valin, bidding me wait at the entrance, entered, despite my entreaties to him. A full year passed as I stood waiting at the entrance; I was seized with fear; much later I saw blood streaming out and heard the noise of demons; I concluded that my brother had been killed, closed the passage with a boulder, offered water to my brother's spirit, and returned to Kishkindha; the ministers forced me to tell the story and made me King by their own common agreement. I was ruling righteously when suddenly Valin ap-

peared after killing the enemy; seeing me on the throne, he became infuriated, imprisoned my counsellors, and spoke severely to me; I fell at his feet and begged his pardon but he would not relent; I offered the kingdom back and explained the circumstances of my becoming King, but he denounced me violently in the midst of all, calling me a villain and a traitor, and banished me with a bare garment; threatened by him I ran round the world, and now I am here as, owing to another reason, Valin cannot enter the Risyamuka hill." Then Sugriva gave an account of the extraordinary strength of Valin, which also, he thought, Rama should be apprised of. "Without the slightest fatigue Valin sweeps across from one sea to another; he plays with hills as with balls; to try his strength, he will shake and break the strongest tree here; there was the huge buffalo-demon called Dundubhi, possessed of the strength of a thousand elephants; Valin not only killed Dundubhi but took his mammoth carcass and flung it one full *yojana* afar; drops of blood from Dundubhi's body fell in sage Matanga's grove and soon, outside the grove, Dundubhi's carcass also fell bringing down a number of trees; the sage Matanga saw this and pronounced a curse on Valin that if ever the latter set foot in his part of the forest for a distance of a *yojana,* he would cease to be and that his agents too should not enter or stay on there; hence is this hill a safe asylum for me and here I am with my ministers; look yonder, Rama, that skeleton of Dundubhi lying there like a hill; you see here seven big *Sal* trees; Valin can shake one of them with his arms, bringing down the foliage completely." At Sugriva's words, Lakshmana smiled and asked him what act of Rama would convince him of Rama's ability to kill Valin. Sugriva asked if Rama could strike and split one of the *Sal* trees and fling with his foot the skeleton of Dundubhi two hundred yards away. Rama's eye had reddened at

the corner and Sugriva, who noted it, added: "Such and even greater is Valin's valour, hence I am afraid; your prowess is yet to be witnessed by me; I do not slight you; your word and your bearing are enough assurance for me." Rama smiled and with his toe, flung Dundubhi's skeleton ten *yojanas* afar. Rama then drew his bow, and the arrow shot by him pierced not one *Sal* tree only, but all the seven, and the earth as well. At this Sugriva was amazed; he folded his palms in respect and fell at Rama's feet.

"Now, let us go to Kishkindha," said Rama, and together they went there and stood behind trees in a dense part of the forest. Sugriva roared and Valin came out in great anger. A fierce duel between the brothers followed, but Rama could not discharge his fatal arrow since he could not distinguish between the two brothers locked in duel; meantime, Sugriva, beaten by Valin and helpless without Rama's aid, fled to Risyamuka, pursued by Valin up to the entrance to Matanga's forest. Rama returned with Lakshmana and Hanuman and explained how by dress, size, movement and voice the two brothers resembled each other so much that he could not aim his shaft; he bade Sugriva go again and challenge Valin to a second duel. He asked Lakshmana to put a garland of *Gajapushpi* flowers on Sugriva in order to identify him.

Reaching Kishkindha again, they all stood as before and Sugriva roared and called out his brother. Valin was then in his private apartments, and as he rose in anger, Tara, his wife, held him in an embrace and in her love and fear spoke to him: "Subdue this anger; having just now been beaten and driven away, Sugriva has come again; I can only conclude that he has some support and resourceful as he is, he can have taken only a tried friend; listen, our son Angada, who has been out, brought me the intelligence through spies that the heroic and in-

vincible sons of the King of Ayodhya, the famous Rama and Lakshmana, have come down here to help Sugriva; Rama, you know, is not only terrible in valour but is the resort and refuge of the good and the afflicted; he is a mine of merit and with that great man, you should not court enmity; enough of this quarrel with your younger brother; install him as crown prince." But Valin refused to take her advice. He persisted in his enmity towards his brother and with regard to Rama, he said: "Oh, he is a righteous soul, he will do no wrong; now go in; you have demonstrated your love; I will not kill Sugriva, but shall just lower his pride." Tara reluctantly left him, wishing him well. Valin girded his loins and fell upon Sugriva; with fists, trees and boulders, the brothers fought; after a time Rama marked Sugriva going down and discharged his deadly arrow at Valin's chest; Valin fell, but the golden garland given by Indra which Valin wore always kept for a time his life and power. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and others approached him. When Valin saw Rama, he addressed him with these harsh words: "You are a prince of a respected family and one who has undergone the disciplines; how is it that you have committed this wrong of striking a man engaged in combat with another? People sing of you that you are kind, benevolent to all, sympathetic, self-possessed, versed in proprieties and firm in your vows; thinking of your virtues, I brushed aside Tara who would have prevented me from taking part in this duel; but I did not know that you were devoid of virtue; I have not harmed you at all; I am a monkey of the forest and unfit to be hunted down for any purpose; if you had fought me in the open, I would have sent you to death's abode; this Sita that you want, I could have brought for you, if you had told me, in one day; I would have caught Ravana by the neck and brought him to you; it is right that one dies and after me, Sugriva becomes King, but it is sinful for

you to have struck me down thus." Reproached in this fashion by Valin, Rama replied: "You have obviously transgressed *dharma* and we are here to put down such transgressions; just as an elder brother is equal to a father, even so, the younger brother is equal to one's son; *dharma* is difficult to comprehend but one's conscience knows right from wrong; Sugriva's wife Ruma should be like your daughter-in-law, and you are committing incest, transgressing the eternal law; for this sin of incest, the punishment of death has been laid down; I have not done this of my own accord, but according to the dictates of *dharma*; if, however, you take shelter under the plea that you are a monkey, then you may take it that I simply shot you down in the chase; in the chase there is no question of either of one's hiding or being in the open." Valin accepted Rama's explanation, bade him take care of his young son Angada. "Surely, I was courting death at your hands, when I came here, brushing aside Tara who tried to dissuade me." As Valin concluded with these words, Rama consoled him. The fall of Valin and the valour of Rama had created a panic within Kishkindha, and as the monkeys, running hither and thither, begged Tara to take care of herself and Angada, Tara overpowered by grief at the fall of her lord, rushed to where Valin was lying; falling at her husband's side, she lamented; she pointed out how his acts of violence had borne bitter fruit. Valin, who was by now at the point of death, asked Sugriva to take the kingdom and look after Angada, who would be of assistance in the battle against the Rakshasas; and he added: "Sugriva, this Tara, daughter of Sushena, is an expert in deciding very difficult questions and what she advocates as good will always be so; Tara's view is never wrong; so act according to her advice; and attend to Rama's work also; if you slight him, he will kill you too; here, take this golden wreath given by Indra; there is wonderful prosperity in

it." Valin then spoke to his son: "Look to the time and place; put up with good and bad, happiness and misery, and be submissive to Sugriva; do not be too much attached, nor too much detached; avoid the extreme and follow the middle path." With these precious words, Valin breathed his last. Sugriva, too, wept bitterly and cursed himself for having brought about the death of his elder brother. Tara, who had a vision of Rama as the Supreme Being, requested him to send her along with her husband. Rama now consoled all of them and Lakshmana pointed out to Sugriva that the last rites for his brother remained to be done. A cremation befitting Valin was conducted.

The leading ministers of the monkey-world then gathered round Sugriva and Hanuman and represented to Rama that with his leave, Sugriva would now enter Kishkindha to attend to the kingly duties and that Rama might be pleased to enter the capital. Rama replied that his vow prevented entry into village or town for fourteen years and that Sugriva might enter the city in order to be crowned and he added: "Have Angada also installed as the crown prince. This is the month of *Sravana* (August-September) and the rains that have set in will continue for four months; no military expedition is possible now. In *Karttika* (October-November) take steps to help me in killing Ravana; I shall stay here in a cave with Lakshmana; this is our understanding; go now to your home." Sugriva entered Kishkindha and was duly anointed King, and Angada, the heir apparent.

Rama went with Lakshmana to the neighbouring hill called Prasravana, a part of Mount Malyavat, and there took up his abode in a spacious cave on its summit.

Rains set in; clouds massed one upon the other like a staircase reaching towards the Sun; the vapour that the scorched ground emitted on the first fall of showers reminded Rama of the sighs of Sita in her forlorn condi-

tion; as showers fell on a full-blown tree, it appeared like Sugriva being bathed for the coronation; with blasts blowing in, the caves appeared to be performing some loud recital; throbbing in the midst of dark clouds, the flashing lightning appeared to Rama like poor Sita, struggling in Ravana's grasp; with the green grass strewn with red cochineal insects, the earth looked like a lady wrapped in a parrot-green shawl with red spots; showers fell like the scattered pearls of the broken necklaces of celestial damsels in sport. Rama addressed his brother: "My grief is intense; the rains are heavy; Ravana is a formidable foe; it all looks impossible; there is no expedition now, and Sugriva has just joined his wife; I do not want to remind him of my purpose; at the proper time he will himself come; let autumn appear." And autumn came on; the sky cleared; moonlight spread like a paste; the lotuses and the swans that came into view reminded Rama of Sita who loved them so much. Lakshmana found Rama suffering from the pangs of love and said: "Noble Sire, what is the use of succumbing to love like this? Why should you thus forsake your manly courage?"

Though the rains had ceased, the roads had become easy for movement, and the time had come for kings to start on their victorious campaigns, Sugriva was immersed in his harem, forgetting his promise to Rama. Hanuman, the vigilant minister, reminded Sugriva. Upon that Sugriva ordered Nila to assemble the monkey armies from all quarters, issued instructions to Angada and again became engrossed in his pleasures. When Sugriva did not appear punctually at the Prasravana hill, Rama was vexed; he said to Lakshmana: "Perhaps because of my pitiable condition, Sugriva ignores me; go to Kishkindha and give that stupid monkey, indulging in low pleasures, this message from me: 'He who promises to help a friend who has helped him and does not keep his

word is the worst of men; even goblins refuse to eat the flesh of the corpses of such ungrateful men; you evidently wish to see my bow in action; four months are now past and you are still immersed in drink; the way by which Valin was sent is not yet closed; stand by our agreement; follow not your brother." Lakshmana observed: "It is only a monkey; how can it observe the conduct of good men? I am unable to restrain my anger; I shall kill him; with these monkey-forces, let Angada carry on the search for Sita." Finding Lakshmana seething with rage, Rama pacified him by saying that in remembrance of the older tie of friendship they should not entertain such evil thoughts; he asked Lakshmana to remind Sugriva gently of his lapse.

When Lakshmana reached the gates of the capital the doorkeepers flew inside in fright and announced his arrival and his anger. Sugriva, lost in his pleasures, did not even hear those words. Angada tried to impress this upon his uncle, but he was not successful; then two ministers, Plaksha and Prabhava, spoke at some length to Sugriva. Sugriva woke up at last and said: "It is easy to make friendships, but hard to maintain them; the mind is inconsistent and even the slightest mistake endangers the affection." Hanuman reminded Sugriva of their promise of help in autumn and said that as the King was delaying the search for Sita, Lakshmana was naturally angry and demanded that Sugriva should meet the brothers, beg their pardon and bestir himself on their behalf. Sugriva then asked Tara to meet Lakshmana and pacify him and that gifted Queen did her part admirably. As she walked up to Lakshmana in all her grace, rendered more attractive by the dishevelled state of her ornaments and dress, Lakshmana bent down his head; as he was in a lady's presence, he suppressed his anger completely. When Tara asked Lakshmana what mistake they had committed to arouse his anger, Lakshmana

pointed out Sugriva's lapse; "Oh, see how he is forgetting himself in drunkenness; drink is very harmful to the interests of moral duty as well as material welfare; nay, it strikes at the root of enjoyment itself; you have a sense of duty and know the work at hand, and you must advise him." Tara pleaded with Lakshmana to be considerate of Sugriva, stranger to pleasures for a long time. "True," said she, "he is by nature given to pleasures, but the preparations for the search for Sita have already been set afoot; the monkey-armies have been ordered to muster; come in freely, you are a friend." Lakshmana followed and when he saw their ally in the midst of his women, he delivered this message to him: "The king who attains eminence in the world is one who is truthful, self-controlled and grateful; there is expiation for the worst of crimes, but none for ingratitude. Sugriva, the way by which Valin was despatched is still open; keep your word; follow not your brother." Tara interceded: "Lakshmana, it is not fair for you to admonish Sugriva so severely; he is not so bad; you do not realise the power of love. I entreat you on Sugriva's behalf; you are extremely agitated with anger; methinks, for Rama, Sugriva would sacrifice anything including his wife and kingdom; do you know the number of Rakshasas in Lanka? It is myriads upon myriads, so did my husband Valin tell me; and how can Sugriva fight Ravana without an adequate following? Messengers have been despatched to bring all our armies; Sugriva is waiting for their arrival in full before starting to meet Rama; the understanding is that he would see Rama again with all his armies; give up this anger; here, crores upon crores of monkeys will follow you." Lakshmana became mollified; Sugriva tore and flung off his garlands, rose up and offered his own apologies to Lakshmana. Lakshmana asked him to come along and explain to Rama.

Sugriva was a stern master and on his command the

monkeys gathered in countless numbers at Kishkindha; there was no monkey left in the world. Immediately followed by all these forces, Sugriva left for Rama's presence in a palanquin along with Lakshmana. Rama was pleased at Sugriva's arrival with his armies. Embracing his friend, Rama told Sugriva: "One should pursue duty, material gain or enjoyment, each at its proper time; a man who pursues enjoyment alone, neglecting duty, is like one sleeping on a tree and waking up after falling down." Sugriva replied: "Here are my monkeys, myriads of them. They will destroy Ravana and all his Rakshasas; Sita will be recovered." As they were talking, fresh multitudes of monkeys arrived, screening the light of the sky itself. Running, jumping and roaring, some of them as large as elephants, the formidable monkeys had come in immense numbers. Supremely gratified, Rama embraced his friend again and said: "Let Sita be found; let us know if she is alive or dead; let them find out the whereabouts of Ravana; and having learnt these, I shall then do, with your help, what is needed. Now, you are to act, not I or Lakshmana; so issue the order." Sugriva then called the leaders, ordered them to proceed each in one direction and search for Sita and Ravana in every hill and forest and in all the islands across the seas on that side up to the very end of earth; Sugriva gave them a month's time within which they should report the result of their search; and delay beyond that time was to be punished with death. And to each of the leaders going in one of the four directions. Sugriva gave a complete account of the geography of that part of the earth. Sugriva selected his choicest followers for the search in the south, Hanuman, Jambavan the son of Brahma himself, the crown prince Angada, Nila, son of Fire, and others; to Hanuman he gave special instructions; for it was in Hanuman that Sugriva had full confidence that he would succeed in any mission entrusted to him; in him

alone were strength, intelligence, sense of time and place and the politic way of doing things. Rama also observed the special confidence Sugriva had in Hanuman, and being himself aware of Hanuman's capacity to achieve his object, Rama gave Hanuman his signet-ring as a token of recognition, to be shown to Sita when he met her as his messenger.

The monkey hosts that started in search covered the skies like locusts. The parties that went to the east, north and west returned with the news that they could trace neither Sita nor Ravana. The party under Hanuman that was entrusted with the search of the whole of the south, searched every hill, cave and forest as far as the Vindhyas. They had exceeded the time limit and had not yet succeeded in tracing Sita. Thereupon Angada, the leader of the party, observed: "Sugriva is a terrible master; let us search more intensely." They were completely exhausted and were overcome with hunger and thirst. They came upon an underground cave called Rikshabila; noticing evidence of water there, they groped their way in and arrived at a most wonderful place with water, light, trees, fruits, drinks and every beauty and comfort, a magic cave and garden created there by Maya. When they eventually emerged, the monkeys found symptoms of the onset of the spring season and realised that they had spent a good deal of time in the magic cave of Maya. Now despondency seized them, and the gifted prince Angada said: "We have not carried out the order of our King; we have no alternative now except to lay down our lives; Sugriva is severe by nature and is now King; instead of dying at his hands, let us fast unto death here itself; he would be particularly drastic in dealing with me; mark you, he did not crown me heir apparent; that prince of men Rama did it." The other monkeys agreed that there was no hope of their survival after returning to Kishkindha and that they might as

well take their lives at that very place. Listening to them, Hanuman thought Angada had verily taken away the kingdom from Sugriva's hands; Hanuman thought very highly of the intellect of Angada, and used all his powers to wean away the monkeys from Angada's side; to Angada himself Hanuman spoke veiled threats. The words of Hanuman brought forth Angada's more severe strictures on his uncle. "In the fear of Rama and Lakshmana he has sent us on the search, not out of fear of transgressing right and truth; oh, he is so cruel that he will secretly put me to death. I prefer to fast unto death here." Saying these bitter words, Angada sat eastward on the sacred grass, and many a monkey there, with tearful eyes, followed suit in a fast unto death.

On that very hill on which the monkeys thus sat in the final act of their lives, was the hoary eagle Sampati, brother of Jatayus. Sampati was hungry and it desired to devour the monkeys seated there. Angada drew Hanuman's attention to the death that was approaching them in the form of Sampati: "On behalf of Sita, one eagle Jatayus gave up its life and another eagle here is out to take the life of those who are engaged in Sita's welfare." Sampati heard its brother's name and the news of its death at Ravana's hands with both satisfaction and dejection, and spoke to the monkeys: "With my wings burnt by the sun, I am deprived of flight; please take me down the hill." The monkeys thought that it was only a ruse of the old bird to devour them but to those who had decided to die, what did it matter how they died? So Angada brought the bird down and narrated to it in more detail the story of Rama, the death of Jatayus, their futile search for Sita and Ravana, and their resolution to give up their lives. When Sampati revealed that he and Jatayus were brothers, Angada said that if it was Jatayus' brother, it should know Ravana's whereabouts. Sampati replied: "Verbal service is all that

I can render now; I saw a damsel being carried off by Ravana; she was crying 'Rama,' 'Lakshmana' and flinging away her garments and ornaments. That Rakshasa, the son of Visravas and brother of Kubera, is Ravana and he lives in Lanka, the island city a full hundred *yojanas* in the sea from here; in that city Sita stays, dejected and closely guarded by ogresses; by my inner vision, I see that you will succeed; with my divine sight I can see from here Ravana and Sita in Lanka; find out a means to cross the seas; let the slaughter of my brother be also avenged."

In great joy, the monkeys then reached the northern shore of the southern sea. When they saw the vast rolling breakers before them, they despaired; Angada encouraged them and in the night called them together for counsel. He asked who among them could jump over the sea, find Sita and free them from the fear of death at Sugriva's hands. Everyone told in reply the distance which he could jump. All this time Hanuman was silently sitting at one side; Jambavan exhorted him: "Hero of the monkey-world, great expert in all lores, wherefore are you thus sitting silent in a lone corner? Strength intelligence, power, force, all these you have, but what you know not, let me tell you; when you were begotten by the Wind-god Himself, He gave you the boon that you would be his own equal in flying; Brahma himself gave you the boon that no missile would harm you in battle and Indra conferred on you the boon that Death would come to you only if you wished.[1] You are our sole saviour in this situation; rise and take your strides, even as Vishnu who measured of yore the three worlds."

As Jambavan's words fell on his ears, Hanuman began growing in size and waxing in power; seeing him,

[1] Hanuman is the object of a widely prevalent worship and is adored as an Immortal, an embodiment of service and devotion to the Lord, and as spiritual Master.

the monkeys roared, lauded him and looked in wonderment. Becoming now fully conscious of his innate power, Hanuman exclaimed: "I can now traverse the ends of earth, all the seas and the entire sky; as I speed across the sky, appearing to devour it, I shall blow away the clouds, rock the mountains and stir up the ocean; I shall find Sita and even bring her back." His exhilarated friends said: "With the blessings of the elders, fly forth; our lives are in your hands; we shall be standing on one foot until you return." Hanuman ascended the cliffs of the Mahendra mountain whence he would take his flight.

SUNDARA KANDA (THE BEAUTIFUL)[1]

Hanuman saluted the Sun, Indra, his father Vayu, Brahma and the various beings. The tread of his feet shook the mountain, from which boulders rolled down, water flowed and flowers shed their petals and terrible noises issued from the animals in the caves. "I shall try to fly to Ravana's Lanka like an arrow discharged by Rama; by all means, I shall return with success," said Hanuman to himself as he took off on his flight.

At the end of a flight of a hundred *yojanas*, Hanuman espied a wooded region, then the island and the gardens of the approaches to the Malaya mountain of Lanka. He thought that his huge form might arouse the needless curiosity of the Rakshasas and hence reduced himself to a very small size. He landed on the summit of the hill Lamba and saw ahead of him the city of Lanka standing on the summit of the Trikuta mountain.

The flight of a hundred *yojanas* did not make Hanuman heave even a deep breath. Hanuman saw not only the beautiful parks all around, but a large number of guards posted evidently for the safety of Sita. With its golden rampart, moats, high white mansions, flags

[1] Special merit attaches to this book of the epic, for which reason it is also read independently.

and ornamented gateways, Lanka bore a celestial appearance; indeed with its high mansions, it looked as if it were flying heavenward. It was as if Lanka had been fashioned not by hand, but by mind. Equipped with armaments, well-protected, surrounded by the sea, and ruled by the terrible Ravana, Lanka did, for a moment, make Hanuman despair of success. He wondered how Rama and all the rest could come and what they could do even if they succeeded in coming.

It was unthinkable for Hanuman to enter the city in the same form; if he was found out, the whole work would be ruined, and the Rakshasas were clever and powerful. He therefore awaited nightfall and contracted himself to the size of a cat. As he entered the city, the prospect of seeing Sita filled him with both sorrow and joy. The moon too, as if to help him, made its appearance, lighted up the world, and shone like a swan swimming in the lake.

Bathed in the moonlight, the inmost part of the city presented a wonderful appearance. Hanuman went searching in every direction; he saw men and women revelling in music, dance, drink and merriment, but he could not see anywhere among them that high-born lady who had been snatched away from Rama and was firmly following the eternal path of virtue. He jumped over the quarters of the army-chiefs, ministers and the leading Rakshasas and took note of the high affluence of all. Crossing them all, he came to where Ravana himself lived, a place dazzling with gold and gems, with beautiful structures, with parks, ponds and streams, a veritable treasure-house, indeed a heaven on earth. At the centre of it, shone the celestial mansion *Pushpaka Vimana*, made by Visvakarman, the divine architect, which could assume forms and fly at will and which Kubera the Lord of Wealth got from Brahma as a reward of his penance before Ravana seized it from him when he snatched

Lanka from his elder brother. There was hardly an inch of this *Vimana* which had not been wrought with care and which the architect himself had not admired. It was the fruit of penance and borne by spirits that moved in the air.

In the middle of the *Pushpaka Vimana* was Ravana's own abode, wide and comprising many apartments. The smell of fine food and drink greeted Hanuman; with every element of attraction, Ravana's palace gratified all the five senses with the choicest objects of enjoyment. On fine carpets, were lying a thousand lovely women. It was now midnight and after music and merriment, they all lay in various poses, looking like a pond of lotus blossoms fast asleep, like stars fallen from heaven and gathered together, or like a huge garland strung with blossoms of girls, a veritable forest this of Ravana's women. Among them there was none of low birth or poor appearance; he had won them all, but none had been forcibly carried off, not one who was not attracted and attached to him, except the daughter of King Janaka, whom one superior to him alone deserved. Hanuman saw Ravana's harem and reflected: "Well would it have been for Ravana if Rama's virtuous wife too were of the same class as these women; but that lady of stainless virtue being who she is, woe unto this great Ravana who has done her this wrong."

In their midst was a crystal jewelled platform, couch and throne in one, overhung with garlands, furnished with the costliest carpets, and with a white parasol above shining like the moon; on it Hanuman saw the King of the Rakshasas, lying like a dark cloud, his lace garments, jewels and earrings flashing like lightning, lying after drink and sport with his beloved women. As the breath of the powerful Rakshasa hissed like a serpent, Hanuman advanced cautiously. On one side there was a special couch on which Hanuman noticed an exceptionally

beautiful woman, with whose brilliance the hall seemed illuminated. That fair golden-hued lady was Mandodari, the Queen of Ravana, but Hanuman thought by reason of her beauty that she was Sita. He was filled with glee, lashed his tail and kissed it, frisked and jumped up and down the pillars. In a moment, however, he abandoned that idea and plunged into thought: "Bereft of Rama, that lady would hardly sleep, much less eat, drink or dress; it is unlikely that she would be by the side of another; for even among gods, there is not one equal to her husband Rama; this is a different woman."

Hanuman searched many places but there were still more remaining. He went up and down, walked hither and thither, opened and shut doors, and scanned Ravana's private apartments without leaving even four inches of space unexamined. He came across wonderful women, women from the Vidyadharas, Nagas and others; but not Sita. He became despondent, but pulling himself up, he resolved to search again. He said: "Ah! here is the park of Asoka trees which I have not searched. I shall go there after saluting the gods." He rose up with renewed enthusiasm and uttered a prayer.

It was the beginning of spring and the various trees of the garden had burst into bloom. Hanuman shot into the garden like an arrow. As he jumped from tree to tree, flowers rained; he walked over the marble and metal pavements, looked at the ponds, waterways, seats, pathways, bowers, pavilions, raised mounds with waterfalls and platforms with sunshades. There was a high, thousand-pillared pavilion there, with a golden platform and coral steps, blinding the eyes with its brilliance. On that side Hanuman saw a lady in soiled garments, emaciated by fasting, as difficult to see as the first digit of the waxing moon, like a flame enveloped in smoke, with suffering and penance, with tears and sighs, immersed in sorrow and thought, missing her beloved one and seeing

all around only ogresses, like a fawn encircled by hounds, her locks twisted into one long rough plait, obviously a lady used to happiness and unused to such miseries. This time the grounds of his reasoning were correct and Hanuman inferred that she was Sita.

Hanuman thought to himself: "This is the fair Queen of Rama, who though lost to his presence is not lost to his mind; this is the lady for whom Rama undergoes a fourfold torment: compassion that she is a woman, tenderness that she is a dependent, sorrow that she is his wife, and the pangs of love that she is his beloved. Her form and Rama's, limb for limb, are in perfect agreement; her heart is in him and his in hers; hence does he endure even for a minute; but I should take Rama to be a man of hardihood for continuing to live without her and not perishing."

As Hanuman thought of meeting Sita, he found near her a large number of most fierce ogresses posted to guard her. They were sitting round a tall tree and under that tree and in their midst, sat the irreproachable Sita, like a fallen star, bedecked with virtue and devotion to her lord, and looking like a neglected lyre. Hanuman shed tears of joy and bowed to Rama.

Night had now almost come to a close; in the early hours of the morning, the Rakshasa priests began their sacred chants; the morning music played; and Ravana awoke. As he arose, before setting in order even his dress, he thought of Sita. His lust was inordinate, and hardly admitted of hiding, and he immediately started for the *Asokavana* where Sita was. A hundred women followed, holding lamps, fly-whisks, jars of water and wine, seats, parasol and staff; they were themselves not fully awake, their eyes still reeling with intoxication and sleep, their dress and ornaments dishevelled. The sounds of their tinkling anklets fell on Hanuman's ears. As Ravana came, he had, by his magic power, taken an en-

ticing form and was walking with a leisurely graceful gait. As he approached, Hanuman hid himself in the boughs and foliage of the tree and watched him minutely.. Struck by his brilliance, Hanuman fell back and hid himself in the thick of the foliage. Ravana turned round to see Sita. At his very sight Sita shook like a slender tree in a gale. Sitting up and covering her body with her legs and arms, she wept. Ravana saw her who appeared, ever and anon, to mount the horses of her thoughts and speed to Rama's side; she looked like Fame soiled, Future blasted, a sacred Altar polluted and a Goddess forced to beseech with folded hands. To that dejected and devoted lady, Ravana addressed sweet words of love. "Why do you hide your pretty body like this on seeing me? Have no fear: this is the accepted Rakshasa conduct, this courting of others' women or carrying them off by force. Still I do not want to force you if you have no love: here are vast riches and excellent comforts and pleasures: a gem of a woman and in my custody, how can you neglect yourself like this? Whatever limb of yours I see, there my eyes are fixed; come, become my chief queen; what are you going to do with this poor recluse of a Rama performing vows and lying on bare ground? I am afraid, he may no longer be alive; even if he is, he can never hope to see or take you back from me."

With tears, in slow tones, Sita replied: "Turn your mind away from me; take to those who are your own. I am the devoted wife of another, born in a great family and married into a great family; it is impossible that I should do anything unworthy; how can another's wife become yours? Observe the conduct of the virtuous and act according to their example. Just as you should protect your wife, so should others, theirs; think of your own analogy and seek your own women. Are there no good men to advise you here? Or, if there are, why do you not listen to them? The King who is not self-control-

led is the ruin of his people and country; everyone will delight in your ruin; you cannot tempt me with sovereignty or riches: as light with the Sun, so am I one with Rama; restore me to him; Rama is one whose friendship you should cultivate, if you want to maintain your position and avoid a terrible disaster; he is righteousness itself and affectionate to those who resort to him; otherwise ruin awaits you, for Indra may lower his thunderbolt; Death may ignore, but not Rama, once his anger has been roused; you impotent Rakshasa! After Rama had reduced the whole of Janasthana to a desert, you basely stole me in his absence! If you had seen the two brothers, you would have skulked away like a dog before tigers; hide as you may, you cannot escape Rama now." Ravana was incensed and told Sita: "The more gently the suitor talks, the more does the woman insult him; my passion for you restrains my anger; for every word of scorn that you have uttered, you deserve torture and death; I give you two months' time, and if at the end of that period, you do not yield, my cooks will dress you for my breakfast."

When Ravana had retired, the ogress-guards closed upon Sita and tried all their tricks; some spoke harshly, and some tempted her, extolling Ravana's divine pedigree. To them Sita, with tears in her eyes, pointed out the principles of morality in an elementary manner: "I am human, Ravana is a Rakshasa; I cannot be his wife; meek or weak, my husband is my lord." Sita wept and said that she preferred death at their hands; holding a bough of the Asoka tree and sighing, she invoked Rama, Lakshmana, Kausalya and Sumitra: "I do not want to live, but death seems not to come. O fie upon me! Has he, the ever-sympathetic Rama, become hardened owing to my misfortune? He who slew, single-handed, fourteen thousand Rakshasas at Janasthana, why has he not come to my rescue now?"

Sita had reached the verge of despair. She wondered if all her virtuous vows had proved futile and was about to take her life by tightening her plait of hair round her neck. It was at this critical juncture that good omens appeared.

Hanuman, who overheard the threats of the ogresses, cast about in his mind for the best way to reveal himself and console Sita whom he had found after such an arduous search. "It will be wrong for me to go back without meeting and comforting her; and I should comfort Rama too with her news; it is not possible to speak in the presence of these ogresses; this is the best time; for today is critical and if I delay, Sita may not outlive the night. I am a monkey and if I talk Sanskrit as the high-bred twice-born do, she may take me to be Ravana in a fresh guise; how can a monkey converse with her except in a human language? And I should not add to her fright just now; the ogresses will also find me out, assail me and summon the Rakshasas; I may be bound and prevented from returning; or suddenly they may avenge it all on Sita and our whole work will be ruined. I can, of course, fight the Rakshasas, but a combat is always uncertain and I have to make a return flight; to be a successful messenger is indeed difficult; a weak and confused messenger may ruin the whole cause." Cogitating thus, Hanuman decided that if he should sing of Rama and his glory, he could not only avoid alarming Sita but hope to rouse her faith in himself.

Hanuman began accordingly to sing sweetly of Rama close to Sita's ears, beginning with Ayodhya and Dasaratha, and of her abduction by Ravana, and narrating the further events which she did not know—the sorrowful search by the brothers, their pact of friendship with Sugriva and his own arrival there as a messenger on the information given by Sampati. When these words fell on her ears, Sita was filled with amazement; she raised her

face and looked up at the boughs of the Simsupa tree. But when she saw there a monkey, she was filled with fear and wept again; she called out the names of Rama and Lakshmana, thanked the Gods and said: "Let what this monkey has narrated just now be true!"

Hanuman then descended from the branch of the tree and stood respectfully before her and revealed himself as Rama's messenger and conveyed to her Rama's loving enquiries about her welfare. "Ah, well do they say in the world," said Sita, heaving a sigh of relief, "that if one continues holding on to life, one sees happiness, even though it be after a long time." The two then conversed in confidence, and affection developed between them; but when Hanuman stepped nearer her, she became alarmed that it might after all be Ravana himself. Sita bade him speak more about Rama in order to find out for herself if he was really Rama's messenger. Hanuman sang eloquently of the qualities of Rama and Lakshmana; Sita then asked him the circumstances under which the friendship between the men and the monkeys came about, and also asked him to describe the form and the limbs of Rama and Lakshmana. Hanuman recounted not only the high mental and moral endowments of Rama and his physical valour, but set forth in detail every aspect of the physical features of the two brothers. Narrating the incidents leading to the friendship between Rama and Sugriva, he mentioned her throwing down her garment and jewels to five monkeys on a hill near Pampa Lake; this increased her faith, and the further account of Rama's exploit in killing Valin and the gathering of forces by Sugriva put new strength and hope into her. Hanuman then told her of his own divine origin. All these were sufficient to convince Sita of the genuineness of Hanuman; tears of joy flowed from her eyes and her face shone like the moon freed from the eclipse.

Hanuman continued: "Fortunate lady, I am indeed

Rama's messenger; see, here is the signet-ring that he gave me so that you might recognise me; rest assured now; the end of your suffering is at hand." Taking her. lord's ring, Sita was as joyful as if she had recovered Rama himself, but was also touched with the sense of shame for her misgivings and praised the great monkey. Hanuman said: "Rama's delay is due only to his failure to trace your whereabouts; on hearing from me, he will march on Lanka and rid this place of the Rakshasas. In your separation, Rama refuses good food; he does not even brush aside flies, mosquitoes or insects settling on his body; he has no sleep and if he dozes, he rises up suddenly, uttering your sweet name; if he comes across any flower or fruit, or anything exceedingly charming, he sighs, 'Ah, my beloved!' and begins to address you."

These words of Hanuman poured into Sita's heart like a stream of nectar; she was however sad to learn that her lord was suffering so greatly; she thought of Fate, the cause of their suffering, and told Hanuman: "Ask Rama to hasten; this is the tenth month; there are barely two months for the limit that Ravana has set for my life. There is Ravana's brother, Vibhishana; he has many a time striven hard with Ravana and pleaded that I should be returned to Rama, but Ravana takes no heed." Sita then narrated the following episode, in tones choked with tears: "This is the best token of recognition that I can ask you to remind Rama of: At Chitrakuta when after a bath in the Mandakini, Rama was resting on my lap, a wretched crow attacked me and tore my body with its claws; Rama woke up as drops of my blood fell on him; looking about in anger, he found the crow which was really Indra's son in that guise; Rama drew a blade of grass from where he lay and charging it with the power of the most terrible missile Brahmastra, discharged it against the crow; the blade chased it all over the heavens; neither Indra, his father, nor any sage could

afford it protection; it returned and fell at Rama's feet; as it lay begging his protection, Rama forgave it, though it deserved to be killed. Rama, you know, is a protector of those who surrender to him. Now remind Rama of this incident that took place in private and ask him why he who discharged the Brahmastra itself against a mere crow on my account, puts up with one who has carried off my very person. You tell him also that kindness, as he himself has told me many times, is the greatest virtue and ask him why he has neglected me in such suffering." Hanuman consoled her with the assurance that Rama and Lakshmana would soon arrive and rid her of sorrow after reducing Lanka, Ravana and his adherents to ashes. He asked her also if she had any message for Lakshmana and Sugriva. The reference to Lakshmana moved her deeply; remembering her unbecoming words to him, whereby all that trouble started, she spoke repeatedly of her great brother-in-law. Then she untied from the end of her garment her crest-jewel and asked Hanuman to give it to Rama. She added that the sight of that jewel would rouse in Rama's mind memories of mother, father Dasaratha and herself. To Hanuman himself she said: "Take effort and see that my misery comes to an end; in the achievement of this, I rely on you."

Taking leave of Sita and finding his work almost over, Hanuman moved aside and began to think: "The Rakshasas are not amenable to conciliation or material temptation nor is it possible to divide them; actual force alone will be effective in their case. He is a real messenger who, when entrusted with a mission, achieves manifold objects in consonance with that; manifold are the means of accomplishing a cause and he who knows a thing in all its issues is the person capable of doing it; if I gather information about the comparative military strength of my side and that of the Rakshasas, I shall certainly have accomplished a further part of my master's com-

mand. I shall have also shown these enemies a sample of the forces that they have to contend against; how shall I court a fight with the Rakshasas? This *Asokavana* is Ravana's favourite garden; if I destroy it, the enraged Ravana will order his warriors to attack me." Having made his decision, Hanuman swept across the *Asokavana* like his father the Wind-god, smashing its trees, bowers and structures. Great commotion arose and the ogresses who woke up to the danger ran to Ravana and informed him that a powerful monkey of awe-inspiring form had been seen conversing with Sita and that the *Asokavana* was being destroyed by him. Sita, they said, would not disclose his identity and the monkey had destroyed every place except the spot where she sat.

Ravana was infuriated at this news and he ordered his special host of eighty thousands called *Kinkaras* to proceed against the monkey. Hanuman who was now at his full stature lashed his tail, roared, plucked an iron rod from the arched gateway and with it smote down every one of them. Then he demolished the pavilion in the *Asokavana* and shouted that thousands upon thousands of monkeys, possessed of the strength of tens of hundreds of elephants, had been sent by Sugriva to discover Rama's enemy.

Ravana then sent Jambumalin, son of Prahasta; Jambumalin was followed by the sons of the ministers; Ravana next sent five commanders of his forces. Hanuman killed them all. Ravana's eye then fell on his young son Aksha; Aksha waged a brave battle against Hanuman, who applauded the boy for valour much in excess of his age; great was the consternation that the death of this son of Ravana produced. And Ravana decided that only Indrajit, his senior son, should now tackle the monkey. "In you lies my ultimate strength; it is of course unwise to send you but such is the rigour and exigency of our military life," said Ravana as Indrajit

left in his chariot. Indrajit was undoubtedly a match for Hanuman. When he found that Hanuman could not be killed, Indrajit aimed the divine missile Brahmastra to render Hanuman captive; Hanuman thought of the boon conferred on him by Brahma and submitted himself to the bondage. "I shall be freed of this; but if I submit myself to it for a while, there is the great advantage that I shall be taken to Ravana and can have a talk with him." Hanuman allowed himself to be taken to Ravana's presence.

Ravana was sitting in all his splendour and puissance, surrounded by his ministers; his lustre indeed cast a spell on Hanuman who thought within himself: "Ah, what a personality, what courage, what strength, what lustre! Ah. the King of Rakshasas has every endowment! If only he had not this serious vice, he would not only be the king of Rakshasas, but a very protector of heaven itself. By his cruel, heartless atrocities and despicable acts, the whole universe is in dread of him." Ravana saw the effulgent Hanuman, and for his part plunged into thought: "Is this the blessed Nandin,[1] who cursed me when I shook the mountain Kailasa? Has he himself come now in this form?" Ravana then asked Prahasta to enquire into the purpose of the monkey's visit and why he destroyed the garden. Hanuman revealed his identity and purpose and addressed Ravana: "Sugriva, King of the monkeys, greets you and sends you this word for your well-being; Sugriva and Rama have made an alliance for mutual assistance; Rama killed Valin and gave the kingdom to Sugriva; now Sugriva has sent us for Sita; thousands upon thousands of monkeys are scouring the world in search of her. I am Hanuman, son

[1] Nandin, attendant on Siva. Ravana in the pride of his valour shook the Mount Kailasa where Siva abides and seeing Nandin, who had a monkey face, laughed at him in derision, whereupon Nandin cursed him saying that he would meet death at the hands of monkeys.

of the Wind-god; I have found Sita here, after crossing the sea of a hundred *yojanas*; you are one who has done penance and are a man of knowledge and you ought not to molest others' women; this is an unrighteous act which will cause you great trouble; who can stand the arrows of Lakshmana or Rama? Listen to me and restore to that lord of men his wife Sita; by bringing her here, you have hugged to your bosom a five-headed cobra; why do you destroy the force of your penance like this? You probably think of your invincibility by gods and others; listen, Sugriva is not in any of the categories of beings at whose hands you have secured immunity from death; even so is Rama; you have long enjoyed the fruits of your meritorious acts; now starts the period of your reaping the fruits of your evil acts; remind yourself of the slaughter of Janasthana and the slaying of Valin and think of what is good for yourself; I can singly round you all up, but Rama has sworn publicly his destruction of the enemy who laid hands on Sita; none, no god even, can save one whom Rama has decided to slay."

Ravana was enraged and ordered the execution of Hanuman. The capital punishment for a messenger who had simply conveyed his master's words was not approved of by Vibhishana. Vibhishana paid his respects to his elder brother and respectfully advised him: "Restrain your anger, O King! Surely this messenger is an enemy and has wrought havoc here; still, messengers are immune from the sentence of death; maiming of a limb, whipping and other forms of punishment are laid down for them; what is the use of punishing him? Punish those who have sent him." Ravana accepted his brother's words and ordered that as monkeys were proud of their tails, Hanuman's tail might be singed. The angry Rakshasas tied Hanuman's tail with cotton rags, poured oil on it and set fire to it. With his burning tail, Hanuman decided to view the whole city once more in broad day-

light. With tom-tom, the Rakshasas took him along the streets and crowds gathered to see him with his flaming tail. Hanuman took a clear view of the whole place. Onlookers rushed into the *Asokavana* and informed Sita of her monkey being led about with a flaming tail. Sita austerely prayed to the Fire-god not to harm Hanuman. Going from house to house, Hanuman set fire to the buildings; on the balconies and at the windows of the houses on flames women screamed; with their children they ran this way and that; the bright metal pillars of the mansions shone in the flames like columns of fire within fire; the burning houses cracked and fell; the sparks of fire shone like saffron in one place, scarlet in another and dark in yet another; smoke wrapped mansions like clouds. Hanuman then wondered for a moment why the fire was not burning his tail and concluded that it was another miracle of the power aiding Rama; he concluded that surely by the power of Rama, by the sympathy of Sita, and by the friendship which Fire bore to his father Wind, Fire was not burning him.

He then jumped over the mansions of all the leading Rakshasa chiefs and then Ravana's own quarters and set them all on fire and roared. "This is Siva Himself or some god or the very anger of Brahma come to annihilate the Rakshasas or this is the inscrutable power of Vishnu Himself," so did some of the wiser Rakshasas observe amongst themselves.

After burning Lanka, Hanuman quenched the fire of his tail in the sea. As he turned and looked at the flaming city, a great consternation took hold of him, for he suddenly remembered the *Asokavana* and thought about the safety of Sita. As he was thus thinking, good omens were seen indicating Sita's safety. At that moment, the celestial beings moving above were speaking to each other about the amazing exploit of Hanuman and the greater wonder of Sita being safe amidst all the

flames. Hanuman returned to the Simsupa tree where Sita was, and found her safe. As he took leave of her, she again laid on him the burden of seeing that Rama came and recovered her.

He ascended the mountain, jumped and flew back. As he neared the northern shore, he started a terrific roar which his companions waiting there heard like thunder. Jambavan called the other monkeys and said that the roar showed that Hanuman had achieved success in his mission; the friends jumped about in glee; from one hill-top to another they ran and they plucked branches of trees and waved them like cloths. Hanuman alighted on the Mahendra mountain and immediately his friends surrounded him and offered him refreshment. Hanuman saluted Jambavan and other elders and the Crown Prince Angada, and said in brief: "Sita has been seen." Taking Angada by the hand in joy, he went to a pleasant spot and there told his friends how he saw Sita and in what a sorrowful condition she was. As Hanuman was speaking some monkeys frisked about, some uttered noises, some straightened their tails and shook them and some came and touched Hanuman in glee. Angada praised Hanuman as unequalled in strength, valour and devotion to his master. Moving again to more spacious stone seats, they all asked him for the detailed story and Hanuman narrated it fully.

Then they started for Kishkindha. Elated with success, they entered on the way the protected honey-grove of Sugriva, in the charge of his old uncle Dadhimukha. Angada gave them leave to drink as they pleased; they drank and played all sorts of pranks. Thereupon Dadhimukha ran to Sugriva and reported the destruction of his beloved honey-grove. Sugriva said: "If they had not succeeded in their mission they would not have dared to devastate my honey-grove; I am sure Sita has been seen and by none but Hanuman; how can the party with

Angada, Jambavan and Hanuman return empty-handed?" Rama and Lakshmana rejoiced to hear these words. Sugriva told Dadhimukha: "They have succeeded in their undertaking and I forgive their excesses; please ask them to come here immediately." Angada asked his friends what they might do then: "I am no doubt the Crown Prince, but I am not here to order you about. I shall do as you say." The monkeys struck by Angada's humility complimented him on his freedom from haughtiness. Then Angada said that they might go to Sugriva; they reached Sugriva in no time, like stones hurled by a machine.

Hanuman informed Rama about the safety of Sita; Rama and Lakshmana looked at Hanuman with affection and regard. They were then told the whole story of the search. Hanuman narrated to Rama the episode of the crow at Chitrakuta told by Sita and gave him the crest-jewel; he told Rama of her message that she could endure for only one month more and concluded that they should now think of the way to cross the sea.

Rama took the crest-jewel on his heart and shed tears; he told Sugriva that the jewel was a wedding present to Sita, that it reminded him of his father and father-in-law and that by recovering it, he considered that Sita herself had been rescued.

YUDDHA KANDA (THE WAR)

Rama praised what Hanuman had achieved as not even imaginable; but placed as he was in that position, he felt very sad not to be able to do anything adequate to reward the great service rendered by Hanuman; he vouchsafed to him one of those precious and rare embraces, like those which Lakshmana received from him only in moments of supreme gratification. But soon Rama's mind was possessed by the anxious thought of how they and the monkey army should cross the sea to

the southern shore. Sugriva suggested that they should build a causeway over the sea to reach Lanka. Rama replied that he could certainly cross the sea by force of penance, by a causeway or by drying up the water. Turning to Hanuman, he asked him to give an account of Lanka, its fortifications and the strength of the enemy. Hanuman described graphically the extensive fortifications of Lanka, its moats and mechanical equipment like catapults and the enormous number of armed warriors there, adding that what he had destroyed was only a fraction of the forces and the fortifications.

Thereupon Rama bade Sugriva immediately start on the expedition, because it was high noon, the sun was at the meridian and the moment was an auspicious one.[1] He added: "Let Nila lead the way, taking the army along safe routes, where monkeys would have ample fruits and roots to eat; let him beware of the snares of the Rakshasas on the way, for they might have poisoned the springs or be lying in ambush." Thereupon Sugriva ordered his monkeys to start.

The countless monkey hosts rolled on like the waves of the sea; they reached the Sahya mountain; Lakshmana pointed out to Rama the lucky omens and the auspiciousness of the planets and particularly of the twin *Visakha*, the patron constellation of the Ikshvakus; simultaneously, *Mula*, the star of the demons, was in affliction and aflame. They reached Mount Mahendra; Rama rose, saw the sea and went to the wooded seashore.

Rama then ordered the forces to camp there as they had to deliberate how to cross the sea spread before them like the sky itself. As they were camping there, Rama felt intensely disturbed and addressed the sea breeze flowing from the south: "Blow from where my beloved

[1] *Abhijit*: the Victorious, always considered an auspicious time to set out on an enterprise.

is; having touched her, touch me also, for in you, I have the touch of her body."

VIBHISHANA

At Lanka, after the havoc wrought by Hanuman, Ravana called a meeting and telling them that they might soon expect Rama with an army of monkeys, asked for their views. Many reminded Ravana of his past exploits and assured him of victory; Prahasta said that Hanuman had caught them unawares, otherwise they would have accounted for him; Vajradamshtra was struck with a brilliant idea; he proposed that taking human form, they should go to Rama in large numbers, pretend to be hosts sent by Bharata to help him, and then destroy his monkey army; several others brandished their weapons and bragged about the havoc they could cause.

Vibhishana restrained the braggarts and the bellicose Rakshasas and made them take their seats, and suggested with folded hands: "Do not rashly underestimate the enemy's strength. This violation of another's wife is conducive neither to fame nor to longevity; it leads to terrible material loss and is sinful. O King! calm this wrath of yours which destroys virtue and happiness; resort to virtue which increases happiness and fame; let us live with our sons and kinsmen; let Sita be returned to Rama!"

The Council met again, *in camera*, on the morrow when Vibhishana again pointed out the evil portents in the city and said that the return of Sita alone could be an adequate appeasement of the evil forces that were gathering. Ravana would not listen, refused to give back Sita and boasted of his powers; he called a larger Council in public and informed the gathering that, as his passion for Sita had but increased, they should discuss and decide upon how he could, without returning Sita,

destroy the two human princes. Kumbhakarna, his brother, who slept six months in the year, had just then waked up and came to the Council; he became furious and told his brother: "You should have held this consultation when you committed the blunder of abducting Sita." Mahaparsva asked Ravana why, being so powerful and so strongly placed, he should not forcibly enjoy Sita. Then Ravana revealed the old incident that prevented him from doing so: "The celestial damsel Punjikasthala was once on her way to Brahma's abode; I forcibly enjoyed her and when Brahma came to know of this, he pronounced a curse that in future, upon any such violence of mine, my head would split into a thousand pieces."

Vibhishana, who had been listening to all this, insisted again that none of them would be able to withstand Rama's prowess and that they should return Sita. Upon this, Indrajit, the foremost of the warriors on the Rakshasa side, told his father: "The words of fear uttered by the youngest uncle are not those of one born in our family; he is the one member of our family devoid of strength, courage and capacity. O timid uncle! Why do you frighten us like this with respect to these two ordinary mortals? I laid low Indra, the King of the three worlds; I plucked the tusks of Indra's elephant, Airavata." Vibhishana replied that if Indrajit spoke like that, it was not his fault, but of him who brought an immature boy like him to the Council. "You are the enemy of Ravana in the shape of a son; you are evil-minded and deserve to be killed, you impudent fool." Vibhishana tendered the most beneficent advice, but as his evil destiny was overtaking Ravana, he not only did not take it but spoke severely to his younger brother; he imputed the worst motives to Vibhishana and called him a blot on the family, a traitor intent on his brother's fall.

Vibhishana spoke what was proper but when his

brother replied thus, he sprang up, mace in hand and accompanied by four others on his side, told Ravana: "You are my elder brother, equal to a father; say what you please; the undisciplined ones whose end is nearing listen not to wholesome words; *King, you can easily have men who always talk sweetly, but of the unpleasant but wholesome word, the speaker as well as the listener is hard to find.* Protect yourself, your city and your kin; I am going; be happy without me."

In a moment Vibhishana came to where Rama was; the monkeys saw above the armed Rakshasa with four of his own; Sugriva uttered a warning to his followers. Thereupon Vibhishana declared from above in a loud voice that he was Ravana's brother, that his repeated advice to Ravana to restore Sita to Rama had failed, that he was himself repudiated and insulted and that, abandoning his family, he had come to take refuge with Rama. "Announce me quickly to that great soul, Rama, the refuge of the whole world," said he.[1]

Sugriva reported this, with some agitation, to Rama who was with Lakshmana, and added: "You should be careful; the Rakshasas are a deceitful folk; he may be Ravana's agent; he is by birth a Rakshasa, brother of your enemy and come from him; how can we rely upon him? I think we should seize him and deal with him severely." Rama then asked everybody to express his views. Angada said: "As a member of the deceitful race, and one who has come over from the enemy's side, Vibhishana should be tested, taken if he is good and thrown out if he is bad." Sarabha suggested that they might send a spy to ascertain Vibhishana's good faith. Jambavan mentioned the critical time at which he had

[1] This is the act of taking refuge in the Lord abandoning everything else—the *Saranagati*—a vital tenet of Srivaishnavism. Vibhishana is the exemplar of this, according to that school which attaches highest importance to this episode in the Ramayana.

come which naturally made him suspect. Mainda proposed that they interrogate Vibhishana. Then did Hanuman, the prince of counsellors, speak out: "I speak fact; without employing Vibhishana in some way, how are our friends going to test him? And he cannot be immediately set on some work; and if he is not to be given work, how can a spy be set on him? The juncture at which he has come here has been remarked about; I think this is just the time when he should come; sudden interrogation is wrong; a man such as he may take offence and a proffered friendship may be lost; one's inner intention is not such an easy thing to be found out; his words do not seem to suggest any bad design; his face is clear; I entertain no suspicion about him; for however much one may try, one's inner idea can never be successfully concealed; he has learnt of your expedition, and has seen Ravana continuing in his evil designs; he has heard of your killing Valin and crowning Sugriva; and he himself, expecting the kingdom, has come here of his own accord. I think he is straightforward."

The clear-headed and formidable Rama said that he too wanted to say a word in the matter and that all of them should listen: "If one comes in friendliness, I will never give him up, even though there may be some fault in him; for the good consider it absolutely blameless to take such a person." Sugriva interrupted: "If he would desert his own brother on the eve of danger, who is there whom this Vibhishana will not desert?" Rama smiled at these words of the King of monkeys, looked around at all of them and said: "All brothers are not like Bharata, nor do all fathers have sons like me; and Sugriva, few indeed will be friends such as you." Sugriva stood up, stated more strongly that Vibhishana should be restrained, and then fell silent. Thereupon Rama told Sugriva: "What does it matter if this Rakshasa is good or bad? He cannot do me the slightest harm. O lord

of the monkey forces! If I but wish, with the tip of my finger, I can destroy the demons in the entire world. Have you not heard of the dove which sacrificed its flesh for the enemy who took shelter under it? A dove protected the person who had deprived it of its wife, and you suggest that one like me should not do as much! Hear this verse sung of old by the great sage Kandu, son of Kanva, this verse of right conduct spoken by a truthful man: 'He who has folded his hands in submission, is meek, beseeches and takes shelter with one, is not to be killed, even though he is an enemy; one should protect at the cost of one's own life, if need be, an enemy who has thus taken shelter with one; if out of avarice or fear or delusion, one does not protect him, as far as it lies in one's power, one commits a despicable sin; it is indeed heinous not to protect him who surrenders unto you;' I shall act according to Kandu's words: *To him who surrenders but once, and beseeches with the words, 'I am yours,' I afford security; this is my vow.*[1] Bring him, chief of the monkeys, I have given security; Sugriva, let him be Vibhishana, let him be Ravana himself."

When Rama thus announced his resolve to afford security to Vibhishana, Vibhishana fell at his feet, saying: "I have taken shelter with you, the refuge of all beings; Lanka, my friends, riches, everything, I have abandoned; my kingdom, life, happiness, everything is in you." Rama looked Vibhishana in the face with love-laden eyes. He then asked Vibhishana to inform him of the enemy's strength. Vibhishana enumerated the prowess of each of the heroes of Ravana's side and the magic warfare that Indrajit would resort to, and prom-

[1] This is *Abhaya-pradana,* the Lord affording security to him who surrenders and takes refuge with Him. This verse along with Gita XVIII., 66, forms the basic text of the doctrine of *Prapatti,* surrender to God, and the Lord's assurance of protection, *Saranagata-rakshana.*

ised assistance in the destruction of the Rakshasas. Thereupon Rama embraced him and asked Lakshmana to bring water from the sea and perform the coronation of Vibhishana as the King of the Rakshasas. Lakshmana carried out Rama's wishes and there was great acclamation in the monkey ranks.

Setu, the Causeway[1]

Sugriva and Hanuman then asked their new ally what they could do to cross the sea. The pious Vibhishana suggested that Rama should perform the act of surrender to the Ocean and the Ocean ought to respond to his supplication and help him. It appealed to Rama, for he was pious by nature; he spread sacred grass on the seashore and lay there, shining like fire on the altar.

At that time Sardula, a spy of Ravana, came over and conveyed to Ravana the information about the two brothers and the hordes of monkeys and bears. Ravana thereupon called Suka and sent a message to Sugriva through him that it was no concern of the King of monkeys if he, Ravana, had abducted Rama's wife and that Sugriva should return to Kishkindha. As Suka came over and delivered from above Ravana's message, the monkeys flew up and brought him down; Suka appealed to Rama that being a messenger, he should not be killed; on being spared at Rama's bidding, Suka went up and asked for a reply to Ravana. Sugriva said: "Tell this to Ravana: 'You are not my friend, you have done no service, you deserve no sympathy, you are Rama's enemy and hence you are to be slain; do not boast of your valour, having killed an old bird and having abducted a wife in the absence of her husband.'" Meantime,

[1] The Setu or causeway at Ramesvaram which Rama built to cross the sea in order to kill Ravana and bring back Sita, is a holy place (*Tirtha*) to Hindus, next in importance only to the Ganga and Banaras; a bath in the sea at Setu is of greatest merit and is the most efficacious expiation for sins.

Angada observed that Suka was taking note of the strength of the army and acting like a spy and not an envoy; immediately the monkeys caught Suka, and only at Rama's bidding did they spare his life again.

"Today I cross the sea or die"—with such determination did Rama lie there in austerity, resting on his mighty right arm; three nights passed, Rama praying to the Sea, and the Lord of the Sea did not appear. Rama then told Lakshmana: "Look at the haughtiness of the Sea! Forbearance, straightforwardness, sweetness, all these become synonyms of impotence when shown towards worthless persons; the world honours the audacious braggart who runs amok, inflicting his severity all around; by peaceful means, no name or fame is possible; wherefore victory in battle? Lakshmana, bring my bow and arrows that hiss like serpents; I will dry up the Ocean and let the monkeys walk dry-shod to Lanka." So saying Rama took his bow and aimed his arrow at the Sea; there was a terrific upheaval of the waters; the sea-creatures felt the torment, and high waves arose; Lakshmana saw the menacing appearance of Rama who was breathing heavily, rushed up and seized his bow: "Persons like you do not give way to anger; take a long-range view and follow the dictates of prudence." The gods and sages gathered above in alarm and implored Rama "Stop, stop!"

As Rama set the terrible missile Brahmastra on the bowstring and threatened the Sea, the Lord of the Seas rose out of the waters, submitted to Rama with folded palms and expressed his willingness to help and afford an easy passage for them to cross. The Lord of the Seas suggested that Nala, son of the divine architect Visvakarman, build a causeway which he, the Sea, would support, and then vanished. Nala came forward to do the work of building a bridge across the waters and the monkey army spread out in all directions, brought huge

trees and rocks and threw them in the water. Lightly did Hanuman fling hill after hill and lightly did Nala catch it and place it on the water; for a hundred *yojanas* thus, the causeway ran across, looking like the Milky Way across the skies; the sea looked like hair parted in the middle. Mace in hand, Vibhishana then stood with his four ministers at the far end of the causeway, to guard it from the enemy; Hanuman and Angada bore Rama and Lakshmana and like a rushing stream, the army went across roaring. The war-drums sounded in Lanka and monkeys replied with shouts. Rama then arranged the forces skilfully in battle-array.

Ravana now ascended to the top floor of his palace to see the enemy's forces himself. From there, he bade Sarana point out to him who was who on the opposite side. Sarana described the leaders on Rama's side and finally informed him of Vibhishana's coronation as King of Lanka. Ravana then took counsel, called Vidyujjihva, the expert in magic, and told him to take to Sita a false head of Rama. Entering the *Asokavana,* Ravana told the sorrowing Sita that Rama had been slain while asleep by Prahasta, and ordered an ogress guard to fetch Vidyujjihva, who, he said, had brought Rama's head from the battle. Vidyujjihva brought the imitation head and left. The head was exactly like Rama's and Sita wept bitterly. Ravana then returned to his court, and soon after his departure, the magic head vanished. Then Sarama, the daughter of Vibhishana, who had become a friend to Sita, approached and consoled her by saying it was impossible to kill Rama thus, and that he was on the seashore with a huge army. As Sarama was uttering this, the war-drums sounded and Sarama assured her of Rama's victory. At Sita's desire, Sarama went to Ravana's court and brought her the news of what took place there; she told Sita that Ravana's own mother Kaikasi had advised him and Aviddha, the old minister too, that Sita

should be returned, but that Ravana had refused and decided to fight Rama.

The battle-cries from Rama's side were heard, and Malyavan, an uncle of Ravana, pointed out the crimes Ravana had been committing against *dharma* and asked him to return Sita and come to terms with Rama. Ravana deprecated Malyavan's praise of the enemy and said: "I will rather break in twain than bend to anybody; that is my native flaw and one's nature one can never get over." Old Malyavan was ashamed to hear this reply and went out. Ravana then ordered, in consultation with his ministers, the disposition of his army and its chief fighters. On his side, Rama ordered that in the ensuing fight no monkey should take human form, that the monkey form would be the token of their recognising their own side and that only seven of them were to fight in human form, himself and Lakshmana, Vibhishana and his four followers.

THE BATTLE

Rama then sent his final message to Ravana through Angada that if the latter did not surrender with Sita, he would have to face destruction. In a moment, Angada was in front of Ravana, announced himself as Rama's ambassador and Angada, son of Valin, and delivered Rama's message. Angada shook off the demons whom Ravana ordered to capture him, shattered the rising pinnacle of Ravana's palace before the very eyes of Ravana and returned to Rama. Then, the siege of Lanka began in earnest. The Rakshasas saw with dismay the whole rampart of the city one mass of monkeys; and each monkey was armed with a rock or a tree. The monkeys began demolishing the walls and filling in the moats. The Rakshasas beat their drums, blew their conches and attacked. The battle began. The leaders on either side paired off and in the first engagement, the Rakshasas lost heavily. The sun set on the first day's battle.

The fight was continued into the night: "You are the Rakshasas here!" "You, the monkeys!" so saying the monkeys and the Rakshasas pitched into their opponents and struck at each other. Angada was fighting hard against Indrajit, smashing the latter's chariot and horses. This infuriated Indrajit; resorting immediately to magic warfare, he made himself invisible and shot Rama and Lakshmana with the missile called the Serpent-noose (*Naga-pasa*); with hardly an inch of their bodies left unhurt, the brothers lay there, bound by the serpent-noose of Indrajit; all the monkeys, and Vibhishana too, became dejected; Vibhishana, however, saw his nephew, Indrajit, standing there, hiding himself from their view by magic and boasting of his exploit; Sugriva became overcome by fear and Vibhishana said to him: "In battle, none knows who succeeds; if luck is on our side, the brothers will recover from the shock caused by the missile; there is no fear of death to those who are devoted to truth and righteousness." Vibhishana then took up some water, sanctified it with the recital of a *mantra* and wiped the woebegone face of Sugriva. He told Sugriva again: "You must not be weak now; rise up and think what is to be done; watch over the brothers till they regain consciousness." Indrajit had meantime scattered the monkeys pell-mell and gone home. Vibhishana rallied the fleeing monkeys and consoled them. Ravana heard of his son's achievement and embraced him.

Ravana exploited the occasion by ordering Sita to be taken in the aerial chariot *Pushpaka* and shown the scene of Rama and Lakshmana lying almost dead. Sita saw and was grief-stricken; but Trijata, who had accompanied her, pointed out that as the divine *Pushpaka* chariot would never bear one in an inauspicious state, Sita's husband could not be dead and she might rest assured of his safety. The aerial chariot then returned and brought them back to the *Asokavana*.

In a short while, being superior in power, Rama recovered from his swoon, saw Lakshmana still unconscious, and could not contain his grief. "When Lakshmana lies thus, what use have I for Sita? If one searches through the world, another woman like Sita can be found, but one like Lakshmana, a brother, a minister and a hero, never." As Rama was lamenting thus, Vibhishana who had re-established the morale of the army, came to the place where he was. As that dark Rakshasa figure was seen advancing, the monkeys mistook him for Indrajit and fled. Sugriva and Angada saw the demoralization of the forces and as they were anxiously talking to each other, Vibhishana greeted them; pointing out that it was Vibhishana and not Indrajit, Jambavan again quelled the disorder that had seized the army. Seeing the brothers lying still, Vibhishana lamented his own ill-luck. "The two by whose valour I aspired to become King lie here thus; Ravana has fulfilled his vow." Suddenly high winds arose, tossing the clouds and the waters of the sea, rocking the world as it were. In a short while the monkeys saw the divine bird Garuda;[1] the moment Garuda was on the scene, the serpent-noose disappeared and Garuda touched the bodies of the two brothers, curing their wounds. The brothers arose with increased strength and enthusiasm. Garuda revealed his identity to Rama, praised him as one considerate even to his enemy, and took leave.

There was an ovation as the monkeys saw Rama and Lakshmana stand up. Ravana learnt that the serpent-noose of Indrajit had been defeated. He sent Dhumraksha, Vajradamshtra, Akampana and Prahasta who were slain by Hanuman, Angada and Nila.

When some of his best warriors had thus fallen in quick succession, Ravana decided to take the field him-

[1] Garuda is Vishnu's own vehicle, and the enemy and destroyer of serpents.

self. As he advanced with his forces, Vibhishana pointed out to Rama the identity of each person in the advancing army. Rama saw Ravana and was struck by his splendour. "All my anger at the abduction of Sita shall now be against him." With these words, Rama equipped himself and stood ready with Lakshmana by his side. Sugriva first attacked Ravana and Ravana smote him hard and scattered the monkeys. Unable to withstand Ravana's havoc, the monkeys ran to Rama, and Lakshmana requested: "Brother, permit me, I shall pit my strength against this low-minded demon." Rama replied: "Yes, go ahead but put forth your best efforts; Ravana is a great warrior, a marvellous fighter in the field, and when he is aroused, he will be more than a match for all the three worlds. Seek his weak points and shield yourself carefully." Lakshmana saluted Rama and proceeded to the fight and Hanuman too joined him. There was a wordy exchange between Ravana and Hanuman who had met him previously. Hanuman smote Ravana with his fist, and while the latter congratulated Hanuman upon his strength, Hanuman himself said that he was ashamed that Ravana survived the blow. Ravana, on his part, hit Hanuman similarly and attacked Lakshmana. Lakshmana broke Ravana's bow and hit Ravana so hard that he fainted. Regaining himself, he seized a terrible missile called *Sakti* which Brahma himself had given him and flung it at Lakshmana. As it landed on his chest, Lakshmana reeled and Ravana ran up and tried to carry him away; a mountain might have been uprooted, but not Lakshmana. With the *Sakti* on his chest, Lakshmana contemplated his inscrutable divine being which was part of Lord Vishnu himself. Hanuman, who was looking on, saw this and brought down his fist on Ravana's chest with such force that Ravana fell unconscious and in the time so gained, lifted Lakshmana and bore him away. Because of his affection for Lakshmana, the latter, who

could not be lifted by the enemy, was light to Hanuman.

The divine *Sakti* left Lakshmana and returned to Ravana, who revived from his swoon. Then Rama advanced against him and the first encounter between the heroes was about to start. Hanuman's offer to take Rama on his back was accepted. "Here am I, your destroyer, he who reduced the fourteen thousand armed demons at Janasthana," said Rama addressing Ravana. Ravana saw that Rama was riding on Hanuman and pierced the latter with sharp arrows; this infuriated Rama who shattered Ravana's chariot, horses and charioteer; wounded in the chest by Rama's arrows, Ravana reeled and dropped his bow; and with another arrow, Rama struck the crown from Ravana's head. Bereft of everything, Ravana stood there dejected. Rama then addressed him most magnanimously, "You have done bravely in today's fight; you have wounded my greatest heroes; you are fatigued and so I will not despatch you; go home now; rest and come back with a fresh chariot and bow; you shall then experience my strength."

Deprived of all his equipment, deprived of his pride and honour, Ravana entered Lanka. As he thought of every single arrow of Rama, flashing forth like lightning, the King of the Rakshasas shuddered. Seated on his golden seat, he addressed his demons: "All my penances are futile; a mere man has vanquished me; Brahma told me that danger would come to me from men, and that has come true; I asked for immunity from death at the hands of every order of beings except humans. Long ago, the Ikshvaku King Anaranya[1] cursed me, saying that a descendant of his would kill me and I am sure this Rama will be my death; Vedavati,[2] too, on whom I

[1] Ravana, in his round of victories, waged war on Ayodhya and killed its King Anaranya, who foretold Ravana's death at the hands of his descendant, son of Dasaratha.

[2] Vedavati, daughter of Kusadhvaja and ganddaughter of

laid violent hands, cursed me; I believe that Sita, daughter of Janaka, must be Vedavati; similarly did Parvati,[1] Nandin,[2] Rambha,[3] and Varuna's daughter[4] pronounce curses on me and the words of these could never become false. Let Kumbhakarna be aroused from sleep; he is the foremost of the Rakshasas, and if at this juncture, he should be asleep for months, of what use is he to me?"

KUMBHAKARNA

A number of Rakshasas went with large quantities of food to the cave where Kumbhakarna was sleeping;[5] his heavy breath threw them backwards and forwards and with difficulty they entered the cave; he was lying there, with his formidable cavernous mouth into which they cast all the food brought by them; they then started to blow conches, beat drums, and to shout; when these had no effect on him, they struck him with different missiles; they poured water on him, plucked at his hair, bit his ears and ran animals over his body. He then slowly woke, his breath blowing like a gale; after swallowing more food, he looked around and found the Rakshasas standing there. "Why have you taken this special effort to wake me? Is there danger from some enemy?" asked Kumbhakarna. Yupaksha, a minister, apprised Kumbhakarna of the situation. After quenching his thirst with

Brihaspati, was doing penance on the Himalayas to attain Lord Narayana as her husband; Ravana forcibly took her by the hair; by force of her penance, she cut the locks of hair in Ravana's hold, and immolating herself in fire before his very eyes, said that she would be born as another divine woman to destroy him.

[1] and [2] on the same occasion when Ravana shook Kailasa.

[3] The celestial damsel Rambha was once proceeding to Nalakubara, Kubera's son, and on the way, Ravana ravished her in spite of her telling him that she was his daughter-in-law. When Nalakubara heard of this, he laid on Ravana the curse that the latter's head would go into seven pieces if he touched an unwilling woman.

[4] Punjikasthala, already referred to.

[5] Kumbhakarna is a byword for anybody who sleeps heavily.

hundreds of flagons of drink, Kumbhakarna proceeded to Ravana's palace. His huge figure striding across the paths, moving like some machine, could be seen outside by the monkeys and Vibhishana informed Rama that it was Kumbhakarna, who had devastated the whole world and whom Brahma had to curse to long spells of sleep in order to immobilise him.

When Kumbhakarna met Ravana, he rebuked the latter for committing this rash act in carrying off Sita in the pride of his strength regardless of consequences, and for relying upon the counsel of impudent fools. Ravana knit his brow, pointed out that he was an elder brother deserving of respect, that Kumbhakarna's eloquence was a waste, and that as what had been done had been done, Kumbhakarna might do what was needed at the moment. Kumbhakarna found his brother much agitated, asked him to forget what he, Kumbhakarna, had said out of brotherly affection, and assured him that he would go forth to the battle and destroy the enemy.

As Kumbhakarna strode to the field of battle, the monkeys fled and Angada had great difficulty in rallying them; Kumbhakarna inflicted heavy losses on them, taking, crushing, flinging and eating eight, sixteen, twenty or thirty at a time; the monkeys for their part flung at him trees and rocks which produced no more effect than a scratch. Kumbhakarna then struck Sugriva down with a piece of rock, seized him and walked away with him, certain that his capture would be the downfall of the whole enemy force. Soon Sugriva regained consciousness, and bit off Kumbhakarna's ears and nose; Kumbhakarna struck him down, desiring to crush him, but Sugriva flew up and escaped, with the result that Kumbhakarna had to return to the fight. Kumbhakarna went ahead and was engaged by Rama. Rama severed his arms with the divine missile of Indra, and then after a strenuous fight, smote

off his head too, which fell, pounding the monkeys and damaging nearby structures.

The fall of Kumbhakarna depressed Ravana greatly; he wept weakly, saying that he had no use either for the kingdom or Sita; he thought of the gods, his one-time victims, who would now laugh at him, and the destruction of Kumbhakarna and Prahasta made him ashamed and even reflect that he was reaping the bitter fruit of disowning Vibhishana. In a further fierce battle that followed, Ravana's son, Atikaya, whose immense size made the monkeys afraid that Kumbhakarna had revived, was felled by Lakshmana. The fall of Atikaya shook the King of Lanka more than that of anybody else; enumerating the heroes on his side who had fallen, Ravana exclaimed: "Oh, powerful indeed is Rama! Great indeed is the strength of his missiles; I think this heroic Rama is the unimpaired Lord Narayana!" He however ordered a close guard to be set on every gate of the city and of the *Asoka* grove where Sita was and entered his inner apartments, overcome by wrath and in great dejection.

INDRAJIT

Indrajit consoled and encouraged his father, and promising to kill the brothers, set out for battle. After putting the army in array, he performed his propitiation of Fire and obtained therefrom fresh missiles, bow and chariot. He first shattered the monkey army in open battle and then, hiding himself by magic, poured out arrows like a shower; the monkeys screamed in agony. Indrajit then turned his shower of arrows on Rama and Lakshmana; Rama told his brother: "Endure the missiles; methinks, Brahma was most thoughtless in endowing Indrajit with boons; how is an invisible person to be killed? Here the monkeys have all fallen and ere long, he will strike us down as well and vanish into his city." And so did Indrajit actually do.

The monkey leaders became downcast with sorrow on seeing Rama and Lakshmana lying wounded; Vibhishana consoled them by saying that such was Brahma's boon and the power of Brahma's missiles that the two Princes had to submit themselves to them for a time. It was night then and with torches in hand, Hanuman and Vibhishana went round the field to see who was left alive on their side. They found that in a fifth part of the day, Indrajit, the favourite of Brahma, had struck down innumerable monkeys. Vibhishana and Hanuman went in search of Jambavan and found him. Jambavan asked Vibhishana whether Hanuman was secure, for if the son of the Wind-god was secure, the life-breath of the army was secure. Hanuman announced himself and Jambavan thought that life had returned. At Jambavan's bidding, Hanuman flew to the mountain of herbs beyond the Himalayas and brought four luminous herbs, the rejuvenators, the removers of broken splinters from inside the body, the restorers of complexion and the menders of broken limbs, which also make the skin grow over the wounds. The very smell of the herbs cured the monkeys of all their wounds and sufferings, and all those that had been struck down dead woke up as if from sleep. While every monkey killed on Rama's side rose, the Rakshasas killed on Ravana's side could not rise, because to hide the extent of loss on his side, Ravana had ordered at the very beginning of the battle that the fallen Rakshasas were to be flung into the sea.

Sugriva then ordered that during the remaining part of the night the monkeys should enter Lanka with torches and set fire to the city. The whole city burst into flame and appeared like a sea of blood. The sounds of the crackling flames were heard over ten *yojanas*. Rama and Lakshmana, who had recovered their vigour, discharged their arrows into the burning city. Ravana blazed with anger. A confused nocturnal battle was waged

in which Ravana lost all the young warriors he had sent.

Thereupon Indrajit propitiated Fire, secured an invisible chariot, and proceeded to the fight. In addition to his magic invisibility, he created also a smoke-screen and showered his arrows on the brothers, who, unable to locate him, could only keep intercepting his arrows as they fell. But Indrajit travelled fast all around them and wounded them all severely. Lakshmana declared that he would aim the Brahmastra to consume the demons, but Rama pacified him by pointing out that for that one person they should not annihilate everyone. Suddenly Indrajit appeared, bringing a phantom Sita and in front of the monkeys, beat her, held her by the locks, slew her, even as Hanuman was protesting, and rushed to the place Nikumbhila where he offered oblations to Fire to replace his magic weapons and chariot.

Hanuman broke the news of Indrajit's slaughter of Sita. The news felled Rama, like the stroke of an axe at the root of a tree; Lakshmana held him and denounced *dharma* whose pursuit had brought them to the tragic end and praised *artha* or expediency.

Just then Vibhishana came there and told Rama that what Hanuman had reported was as impossible as the drying up of the ocean. He said: "I know Ravana's love towards Sita; he would never allow her to be killed thus; Indrajit has killed a false Sita to gain time and has gone to Nikumbhila to perform his magic rites; if he offers the oblation, he becomes invisible; therefore, let us go with our armies and prevent him from completing his rite; forget your sorrow and remain here; let Lakshmana come with us and an army; there is no time to lose." Rama thereupon ordered Lakshmana to go with Hanuman, Sugriva and the forces, and kill Indrajit with the help of Vibhishana.

Around Indrajit was a strong Rakshasa fence which, Vibhishana said, must be broken first. The monkeys

accordingly fell on the Rakshasas guarding Indrajit's sacrifice and destroyed them. Indrajit saw his guards being killed and rose up from his half-offered sacrifice. He came from behind the screen of trees where he was performing the rite and had only his old chariot to mount. Advancing on that chariot he saw Hanuman working havoc among the Rakshasas; Indrajit was determined to kill him and Vibhishana drew Lakshmana's attention to the advance of Indrajit against Hanuman. The two then proceeded and came to the tall banyan tree at whose foot Indrajit made his offerings to the spirits before he actually went to fight. Vibhishana said that if Indrajit succeeded in making the offerings there, he then became invisible in the battle and that therefore they should take their stand there, prevent him from reaching that banyan and fight him. Together the two took their stand there; when Indrajit arrived, he was filled with surprise at finding his uncle and addressed him in bitter terms: "Born and bred here, my father's own brother, how have you become inimical to your nephew? You talk of *dharma* and yet you have no feeling of kinship! It is lamentable that one should give up his own people and become a servant of others. Good or bad, one's own kith and kin are superior; strangers are but strangers." Vibhishana replied: "You know my character, and yet you talk like this! I was born amidst you but my conduct is not demoniac; I delight not in violence or unrighteousness; how can a brother, in perversity, abandon his brother? Violence, depriving others of their possessions, violating others' women, and over-suspicion of friends are three defects that bring about ruin; the cruel slaughter of hermits and sages, enmity with all gods, pride, anger, inimical disposition, the mentality of opposition,—all these are the defects that lead to the ruin of my brother, his life and kingdom; and because of these I left him; you are a haughty boy,

lacking humility and, as your time is coming to an end, you may say whatever you please; here, you may not approach the foot of this banyan; Lakshmana is here to do battle with you." As Indrajit turned his head, he saw Lakshmana on Hanuman's back. Indrajit reminded him of the nocturnal fight and his victory over the two brothers, and Lakshmana pointed out to him the cowardice of magic warfare and of fighting from behind a screen of invisibility.

Then ensued one of the main encounters of the whole battle; for long did the two eminent fighters shower arrows on one another; lightly, wonderfully and in a superb manner, the two hurled their manifold missiles and did not feel the fatigue of the fight. Lakshmana killed Indrajit's charioteer. Thereupon Indrajit himself drove the chariot and fought to the amazement of the onlookers. The monkeys leapt upon Indrajit's horses, killed them and smashed his chariot. Indrajit then alighted and the two fought on foot. Darkness had set in completely, and Indrajit asked his demons to maintain a close fight with the monkeys and escaped to Lanka to equip himself with a fresh chariot. When Lakshmaṇa and Vibhishana and the powerful monkeys saw Indrajit suddenly on a fresh chariot, with new horses and charioteer, they wondered at his speed. Lakshmana severed the head of the charioteer but, to the surprise of all, the horses performed the manœuvres unaided. Indrajit discharged arrows at his uncle, upon which the latter crushed his nephew's horses with his mace; infuriated with his uncle, Indrajit jumped down and aimed the missile called *Sakti* on the former, but Lakshmana shattered the *Sakti* to pieces; Indrajit and Lakshmana then exchanged many divine missiles and finally Lakshmana took the Indra-missile and discharged it with the words: "If Rama, son of Dasaratha, is the embodiment of *dharma* and is unequalled in prowess, O arrow, kill

the son of Ravana!" Though the missile was from Indra who had been vanquished by Indrajit, the Act of Truth with which Lakshmana charged it brought down the head of Indrajit. As Indrajit fell, not only did the monkeys shout in glee but the very heavens applauded. The remaining Rakshasas on the field either fled to the city and the hills, or fell into the sea. Vibhishana, Hanuman, Jambavan and others surrounded and congratulated Lakshmana; the jubilant monkeys embraced each other.

Supporting himself on Vibhishana and Hanuman, Lakshmana returned to where Rama and Sugriva were. Rama not only praised Lakshmana but drew him on to his knee in the midst of all, held him close and again and again looked him in the eyes with affection. Rama passed his palm over Lakshmana's sorely wounded body and said: "After three days and nights of battle you have destroyed Indrajit, the right arm of Ravana." Rama then asked Sushena to cure Lakshmana's body of wounds.

At the news of the death of Indrajit, Ravana fell into a long swoon and when he awoke, he began to lament; but soon, irascible by nature, Ravana became all the more angry at the loss of his great son; he even thought of murdering Sita; as he gnashed his teeth, the sound was like that of a mighty catapult being turned by the demons; in whatever direction fell his scorching glances, there Rakshasas standing by fell back and hid themselves; he then rushed, sword in hand, to the *Asoka-vana* to kill Sita. Sita trembled at seeing him, but one Suparsva, a Rakshasa minister endowed with intellect and purity, prevented him from the unbecoming act of killing a woman and advised him to turn his ire against Rama.

Returning to his court-hall, Ravana ordered a general attack in which the Rakshasas and monkeys had a mixed fight. The monkeys who were overpowered ran to Rama who then performed one of his marvels of archery in the battle of Lanka; Rama sped across, tearing down

everyone, like a gale pulling down a forest; on every side, the demons saw Rama employing the miraculous Gandharva missile; mistaking everyone for Rama, the Rakshasas themselves struck each other down. Rama whirled round like Death, and in an eighth part of a day, reduced ten thousand chariot-fighters, eighteen thousand elephants, fourteen thousand cavalry and two armies of footmen, and told Sugriva, Vibhishana, Hanuman, Jambavan and others nearby: "This power of miraculous missiles belongs either to me or to God Siva!"

The Killing of Ravana

In Lanka, the women, widowed and deprived of their sons, gathered, wailed, cursed Surpanakha, the root of all the calamity, and denounced Ravana for his failure to profit by event after event which proved Rama's superiority. The pitiable wails in every house fell on the ears of Ravana who became all the more angry and ordered the remaining forces to start with him for the battle. He twanged his bow, passed the monkeys and Lakshmana too, and came face to face with Rama.

Rama and Ravana poured in a shower of arrows with which the sky looked like a latticed window. A number of magic missiles were exchanged by the two. Lakshmana shot at Ravana's standard which bore a human head as its ensign, and brought it down; he killed Ravana's charioteer also and broke his bow; Vibhishana slew with his mace the horses of Ravana; enraged at this act of his brother, Ravana jumped down and aimed the *Sakti* at Vibhishana; Lakshmana interceded and shattered the *Sakti*; before Ravana could take a more formidable *Sakti* to throw at his brother, Lakshmana came between them and disabled Ravana; but finding his brother saved by Lakshmana, Ravana turned his anger against the latter and released the *Sakti* at him Lakshmana fell; this shook Rama but realising that it was no time to give way to sorrow, he told the monkeys:

"Take care of Lakshmana; this is the time for me to show my prowess; today you see the world rid of Ravana or Rama; sit quiet on those hilltops and witness this battle between myself and him; see today what Rama is like; *what I do today, the whole universe, mobile and static, including the gods, will be speaking about so long as the world lasts.*" With these words, Rama engaged himself in a fierce encounter with Ravana; even as he was shooting his arrows, he uttered to Sushena nearby his deep sorrow at the injury caused to his beloved brother. At Sushena's instance Hanuman flew again to the herb-mountain, and brought the whole cliff with the herbs and when Sushena applied the herbs to his nose, Lakshmana rose and asked his brother to fulfil his vow to kill Ravana.

Rama resumed his fight more vigorously. Indra then saw from above that while Ravana was fighting from a chariot, Rama was fighting on foot, and sent down his own chariot with its green steeds and the charioteer Matali. Rama mounted the divine chariot and replied to each of the magic missiles of Ravana with a corresponding magic missile. Beset by the arrows of Rama and the stones that the monkeys were showering on him, Ravana began to reel; and his wise charioteer, observing his master's condition, drove the chariot away from the field of action. Ravana, however, did not appreciate the charioteer's service and rebuked him for making him a coward fleeing the field. But the charioteer explained his action to Ravana's satisfaction, and Ravana presenting him with an ornament bade him drive the chariot back to the field of battle.

Ravana just then reappeared in his chariot. The last momentous encounter between the two began with utmost ferocity. The whole army on either side help up their arms and stood silent, watching the duel between the two; with the eyes of either side riveted on its leaders,

the hosts of monkeys and demons looked like a painted picture.

Rama and Ravana fought with determination. They wounded each other's horses, executed dexterous manœuvres, cast arrows, maces and iron bars, and raised the hair of the onlookers, who exclaimed: "The sky can be compared only to the sky, the sea only to the sea, and the battle of Rama and Ravana only to itself."

Rama then severed Ravana's head, and lo! a fresh one appeared; a hundred and one times did Rama slay him thus, and still there was no sign of Ravana's succumbing. As Rama wondered why his arrows and missiles were not sufficiently powerful to take Ravana's life, Matali reminded Rama, "Why do you thus trifle with Ravana as if you do not know how to end him? Aim the missile Brahmastra; the time foretold for his end has been reached." Rama took the Brahmastra which Agastya had given him, the missile which originally Brahma himself had devised and given to Indra, which consisted of the energy of all the elements, and which had ended many a battle in the past; as Rama uttered the Vedic *mantra* for its use and laid it on his bowstring, the entire living world shuddered, the earth quaked; like inescapable Fate, the missile fell on Ravana's heart and returned to Rama's quiver. With life gone, Ravana's body fell from the chariot with terrible force. The remnants of Ravana's forces fled into the city; the monkeys roared in joy; heavenly drums sounded above; a fragrant breeze blew; a rare and charming shower of celestial blossoms covered Rama's chariot; the divine beings sang the praises of Rama; Vibhishana, Sugriva and others in the army adored him with due honour.

The sight of Ravana's fallen body moved Vibhishana, who sorrowed over his brother's fate, which he had, many a time, foretold him as the sure outcome of his lust, delusion and pride. Rama pointed out that there

was nothing to lament in the death of a warrior who had died in the battle and that Vibhishana should think what was to be done next.

Ravana's women came out and surrounding his body, wept. The chief Queen Mandodari looked at her lord and lamented: "Alas! you who had vanquished the gods have met with death by human hands. But I do not believe Rama to be a mere man; even when your brother Khara and his Rakshasas were exterminated at Janasthana, I concluded that Rama was no mere man; it is clear the Supreme Being, the eternal Lord, greater than the great, who is beyond darkness, the invincible Vishnu of true valour, has taken human form, and surrounded by all the gods in the form of monkeys, has come for the good of the world, to destroy you with all your Rakshasa followers. At first you conquered the senses and won the three worlds; as if in vengeance, the senses themselves have now laid you low; I implored you to make peace with Rama; you never listened and have now reaped the fruit of your action. Did you not enjoy beautiful women? By pedigree, beauty, or courteous behaviour, Sita can neither excel nor equal me; in your delusion, you did not realise; death comes to everyone in some form and to you it came in that of Sita. The curses of the virtuous wives whom you violated have come true; truly it is said that the tears of a chaste woman do not fall in vain; mad with your strength, you never listened to my brother-in-law who spoke truth, or to Maricha, Kumbhakarna or to my father, and now has come this destruction of Rakshasas as a result of your continuous addiction to lust and wrath."

Meantime Rama asked Vibhishana to perform the obsequies of his brother. Vibhishana reflected and imagining that he would please Rama, replied: "I should not cremate this Ravana bereft of righteous conduct, cruel, false, and vitiated with the sin of violence to others'

women; no doubt he is my elder brother, but one intent on universal harm, he is really an enemy to me and deserves no honour from me." Rama said in reply: "True, Ravana revelled in vice and falsehood; but he was for long an unvanquished victor over gods and others; and all enmity ends with death and our purpose is achieved; do his obsequies; he is to me what he is to you," concluded Rama suggesting that, if Vibhishana failed in his duty, he, Rama, would himself perform Ravana's last rites.

Thereupon Vibhishana hastened to conduct the cremation of his elder brother. Vibhishana bathed and offered water, the women entered the city and Vibhishana returned to Rama. Rama asked Lakshmana by his side to enter Lanka and perform Vibhishana's coronation. The monkeys flew with golden pots and brought water from the different seas and Lakshmana anointed Vibhishana as King, to the delight of those Rakshasas who had always been on his side. Vibhishana appeased his subjects and returned to Rama with articles of worship; and Rama accepted the honour to please Vibhishana.

Sita's Ordeal

Rama's eyes then fell on Hanuman standing there; Rama told him: "With Vibhishana's leave, enter Lanka, and inform Sita of the good news and return with her message." Hanuman entered Lanka, receiving the salutes of the Rakshasas on the way; he conveyed Rama's message to Sita and in her great joy, Sita could hardly speak. "Why are you silent?" asked Hanuman. Her voice broken with joy, she said: "This happy news from my lord rendered me speechless for a moment; nothing in the world would be an adequate present to you." Hanuman replied: "These words of affection, which you alone know how to say, excel heaps of manifold gems and even the kingdom of heaven." Sita then praised the qualities of Hanuman, his power, forbearance, firmness,

modesty and the rest. Hanuman begged Sita's leave to do away with all those frightful demon guards there who had harassed her. But Sita replied to Hanuman: "No, these were under the control of the King and only carried out his behests, and who can be angry with these servants? Now that Ravana is no more, they will no more threaten me; listen to this old verse, Hanuman, which a bear uttered of yore before a tiger: "*One does not retaliate for another's wrong; good conduct is the ornament of the good; even where wrong-doers deserve to be killed, the noble ones should exercise compassion, for there is none who does not err.*" Hanuman praised Sita as a wife equal to Rama and asked for her message to Rama. Sita said that she desired to see him.

When Hanuman conveyed Sita's reply, Rama was plunged in thought; breathing heavily and hot, he asked Vibhishana to bring Sita fully bathed and dressed. Vibhishana entered Lanka and through his women, conveyed to Sita Rama's wish. Sita sent the reply that she would like to see Rama in the same condition, without bath and toilet. Vibhishana urged her to act as her lord desired; Sita obeyed.

Sita was bathed and richly dressed and decorated; Vibhishana ordered a brilliant palanquin guarded by numerous Rakshasas and brought Sita in it. Vibhishana ordered the servants to clear away the crowd of monkeys and bears that had gathered to have a look at the lady for whom they had waged war; at Vibhishana's orders, servants with canes and bamboos scattered the crowd and as the noise of the monkeys being driven away reached Rama's ears, his kind nature could not tolerate such violence; agitated and with fiery eyes, he taunted Vibhishana: "Why this harassment of these beings, in utter disregard of me? Stop this; *these monkeys are my own*; homes, clothing, parapet walls, curtains, none of these paraphernalia forms a woman's protection; her

character alone is her protection; there is no harm in their seeing Sita, particularly in my proximity; let Sita also see me surrounded by my friends." With great humility, Vibhishana brought Sita to Rama; Rama's words produced acute pain in the hearts of Lakshmana, Sugriva and Hanuman; terrible indications of indifference to his wife on the part of Rama led them to infer that Rama was not pleased with Sita. For her part, melting into herself in shame, Sita approached Rama, addressed him as "Lord," and then shrouding her face in her garment, wept. Sita stood thus with head bent in modesty; but with anger inside, Rama began to address her: "I have won you back in battle, after vanquishing the foe; what man's valour can achieve has been done; I have wiped off the insult offered to me; I have carried out my resolve; the valour of Hanuman and Sugriva and the effort of Vibhishana have all become fruitful." As Rama uttered these words, tears swelled into Sita's large eyes; but infuriated all the more at sight of her, Rama spoke cruel words to her in the midst of the monkeys and Rakshasas: "Know, Sita, the warlike effort made by me was not for you, but to retrieve my name and that of my family; you offend my eye even as a lamp a man of sore eyes; therefore, with my leave go as you please, anywhere; I have no need for you; what self-respecting man, born in high family, will take back a woman who has lived in another's house?"

When these heartless words, uttered in public, fell on her ears, Sita shrinking back in shame, shed tears profusely, and slowly and in a broken voice said: "Wherefore do you, like a man of the street, utter these unbecoming words to me, as if I were a woman of the streets? I am not what you take me to be; believe me, by reason of that character of mine by which I swear; by the behaviour of some low women, you suspect the whole race; if another's body has touched me, I am not

to blame; what is in my control, that, my heart, is wholly in you; you need not have sent Hanuman in search of me and could have abandoned me even then; you could have avoided this vain strain to yourself, endangering your life, as well as the trouble you have given to your friends for nothing; yielding to anger alone, you behave like a man of the street; my birth in Janaka's line and out of Mother Earth, my previous behaviour, the hand that you took in marriage when we were young, my devotion, my character, none of these has weighed with you." Having spoken these tearful words, she addressed Lakshmana who was standing there in dejection and contemplation: "Lakshmana, prepare the pyre, the medicine for this misery; assailed by this false accusation, I cannot bear to live any more; I shall enter fire." Lakshmana looked at Rama in great indignation; and the indication on Rama's face was that he should prepare the pyre, Lakshmana did so. Sita slowly walked round Rama standing with a downcast face, and then approached the blazing fire. Saluting the gods, with folded hands, Sita addressed Fire: "If my heart has not, at any time, swerved from Rama, let Fire, witness of the world, protect me; if by act, thought or word, I have not been unfaithful to Rama, let Fire protect me; if Sun, Wind, the Quarters, Moon, the Day, the two Twilights, the Night, Earth and others know me to be chaste, let Fire protect me." With these words, Sita went round the fire and entered it. Cries of "Ah! Ah!" from monkeys and Rakshasas moved Rama who thought within himself for a moment, tears teeming in his eyes.

Then all the gods gathered together, came to Rama and asked him why he ignored Sita entering the fire; they praised him also as the Supreme Lord, but Rama replied that he deemed himself only a man, Rama, son of Dasaratha. Brahma then told Rama that, in reality, he was Lord Narayana, who had taken a human form

for the destruction of Ravana. The Fire-god, witness of the world, rose up bearing Sita and gave her to Rama with the words: "Here is your Sita; there is no sin in her; she has not been untrue to you by word, thought or sight; accept her; you should not speak a word; I command you." Rama thought for a while and replied, his eyes still in tears: "Yes, there can be no stain in Sita; however, she remained so long in Ravana's place and, in the absence of this purification for her, the virtuous people may remark that Rama, Dasaratha's son, behaved just like a man of youth and passion. I too know her single-hearted devotion to me, but I allowed her to enter the fire so that the world at large would believe in her chastity; Ravana can never violate her who is protected by her own effulgence; she is one with me, even as lustre is with the sun; she is pure and she cannot be abandoned any more than one's fame; you are all the objects of the world's veneration and I must obey your beneficent words." God Siva who was also present pointed out to Rama the remaining part of his work in that incarnation,—the return to Ayodhya for his coronation, his rule as King, the performance of a horse sacrifice,—and assured him that after that he would return to heaven. Siva also pointed out to Rama his father Dasaratha who was seated on a celestial car and was enjoying Indra's world, thanks to Rama's keeping his word. Rama and Lakshmana saw their father above and saluted him. Dasaratha took Rama, his beloved son, on his knees and said: "I say in truth, Rama, without you, I do not esteem even the heavens; I am rid of anxiety now that I see you safe with Lakshmana; you have saved me by keeping my word; Kausalya and all the others at Ayodhya who will see you return and crowned as King are really fortunate; I too desire to see you join the pure virtuous Bharata; you have not only carried out the promise of forest life but have gratified the gods by killing Ravana;

ruling with your brothers, may you live long." Rama folded his palms and besought his father: "Please, undo the curse you uttered against Kaikeyi, repudiating her along with her son." Dasaratha acceded to Rama's request and imparted to Lakshmana the truth that Rama, whom he was serving, was the Supreme Being, the Brahman itself, and told Sita that she should not take to heart the treatment shown to her by Rama, as the purification in fire was only for her own good; Dasaratha then returned to heaven.

Indra, who was supremely gratified, congratulated Rama on his achievement and asked what he could do for him. Rama asked Indra to restore to life and health all the monkeys dead or wounded on his side in the fight and to make all their routes in forests and hills rich in fruits, roots and water. Indra granted all those boons. The gods then took leave of Rama and departed.

Rama's Return

Next morning, Vibhishana waited on Rama with all arrangements in the city for his bath and reception. Rama told him: "Take Sugriva and the monkeys; that virtuous soul, Bharata, is undergoing the rigours of austere life on my behalf; keeping his word, he is longing for me; without him, I do not desire bath, dress or ornament; along this same route, I shall return to Ayodhya." "I shall take you there in a day in the divine chariot, the *Pushpaka* of Kubera which Ravana had taken forcibly; that aerial vehicle which speeds at will awaits you; if I deserve, please let me have the pleasure of showing this honour to you, Lakshmana and Sita; I beseech you as a servant," said Vibhishana. "Vibhishana, what you have done for me with your counsel and help in the fight is more than any reverence you can pay me; it is not that I will not accede to your request, but I am impatient to see my brother Bharata, who came to Chitrakuta to take me home, as well as my mothers and

the elders, friends and citizens; you must give me leave and not misunderstand me; please bring the *Pushpaka* chariot," said Rama.

The beautiful aerial chariot, wrought by the divine architect Visvakarman, arrived, shining with its decorations and resounding with its bells. In accordance with Rama's wish, Vibhishana honoured the monkeys with munificent presents. Rama then mounted the *Pushpaka* chariot with Lakshmana, and took the modest Sita upon his own lap. To Sugriva and his followers, Rama expressed his gratitude and said they might now return to Kishkindha; Vibhishana, he said, should remain in Lanka as its ruler. But the monkeys and Vibhishana begged to accompany Rama to Ayodhya, witness his coronation, and then return to their respective abodes. "Oh! it will only be to my greater pleasure; enter the *Pushpaka* without delay," said Rama. With everybody seated comfortably, that wonderful divine car sped through the air towards Ayodhya.

As they rose into the sky and sped forward, Rama pointed out to Sita the spots on the battle-field marked by the different events of the fight and the causeway over the sea. They reached Kishkindha, where Sita respectfully told Rama that she desired to meet Sugriva's ladies and to take them to Ayodhya. Rama agreed and the monkey-women entered the aerial car. Rama pointed out to Sita the Rishyamuka hill where he gained Sugriva's friendship, the lake Pampa where he wept for her, then Janasthana, the tree where Jatayus fought Ravana, their old hermitage in Panchavati, the hermitages of the other sages where they had called on their journey, the Chitrakuta hill where Bharata met them, and yonder the Yamuna, the hermitage of Sage Bharadvaja, the Ganga, Guha's Sringiberapura, and Sarayu and Ayodhya. From that distance Rama asked Sita to salute their mother city

and the monkeys leapt up to have a distant glimpse of Rama's city.

Rama descended at Bharadvaja's hermitage; the full fourteen years were then complete; Rama enquired of the sage: "Do you hear of the news of the city, its prosperity and welfare, of Bharata's care of my mothers?" "Bharata," replied Bharadvaja, "looks forward to your return; with matted locks and soiled body, he defers in all things to the sandals you entrusted to him; everything is safe in the palace. I am happy to see you return after fulfilling your vow and vanquishing the enemy and surrounded by your friends; stay here for the day and reach Ayodhya tomorrow." Rama agreed.

Looking in the direction of Ayodhya and falling into thought, Rama called Hanuman and said: "Go and see if all are well at the palace; first call on Guha and tell him of my welfare; he is a friend of mine, whom I regard as equal to my own self; from there, he will direct you to Ayodhya, where you will meet Bharata; tell him everything and report to me how he reacts to the news and what attitude he bears to me. Observe closely indications in his demeanour, speech, etc.; for a kingdom like this may convert anybody's mind and if he shows a desire for the kingdom, let him rule." Charged with this delicate mission, Hanuman took human form and hastened to Ayodhya; after meeting Guha on the way, he found at Nandigrama, a *Krosa* from Ayodhya, Bharata dejected, emaciated, living in a hermitage, clad in the robes of a recluse, with matted locks, austere in life, looking like a venerable Brahman sage, and taking care of the kingdom as regent of the sandals. To Bharata, who looked like an embodiment of *Dharma* itself, Hanuman said: "Rama, for whom you are pining, greets you; give up your sorrow; you will soon see him again; he has returned

after killing Ravana and regaining Sita." In his joy Bharata at once fell down and swooned. Recovering, he embraced Hanuman, bathed him with tears of joy, offered him presents and exclaimed: "Well has it been said that if one lives one sees happiness even after a hundred years." Giving Hanuman a seat, Bharata asked him to narrate the whole story in detail. Hanuman gave a *résumé* of Rama's forest life and concluded: "Rama has halted at Bharadvaja's hermitage; tomorrow, when the constellation is *Pushya*, you shall see him." Bharata asked Satrughna to order special services in the temples and to assemble all minstrels and musicians for Rama's welcome. At Satrughna's bidding, labourers levelled the road beyond Nandigrama, watered it and decorated it with festoons and bunting. Then the ministers rode out on elephants; others came on elephants, horses and chariots; foot-soldiers followed in their thousands. The Queen Mothers, with Kausalya at their head, reached Nandigrama; the whole city moved thither. With the white royal parasol and fly-whisks, Bharata went ahead to receive Rama; while he was impatiently questioning Hanuman, the joyous clamour of the monkeys reached them and in a moment they saw the pure divine *Pushpaka* chariot sailing overhead like a moon. Women, children and aged people, all shouted in one voice: "Here is Rama!" and their shouts of joy rose to the very heavens.

The aerial car alighted and Bharata saluted Rama; still seated in the car, Rama drew Bharata on to his knees and embraced him in joy. Bharata then saw Lakshmana, and saluted Sita; he then embraced the monkey-chiefs, who, taking human forms, made kind enquiries of Bharata. Bharata specially greeted Sugriva as their fifth brother and expressed to Vibhishana their gratitude for his assistance. Satrughna then saluted Rama and Sita.

Rama's Coronation

Rama bowed to his mothers, Kausalya, Sumitra and

Kaikeyi, and then to his precepter Vasishtha. The citizens expressed their welcome to Rama; the folded palms that were raised in salute before Rama looked like a lake of lotuses. Bharata took Rama's sandals, put them under Rama's feet, and said: "Here, I have protected the kingdom and I hand it back to you; my life's purpose is now completed; my heart's desire has been realised, now that I see you a king; examine the treasury and the army; by your power, everything has been increased tenfold."

While Bharata continued in this strain, the monkeys and the Rakshasa, Vibhishana, shed tears. With Bharata on his knees and with all of them riding on the divine chariot, Rama reached Bharata's hermitage at Nandigrama. They alighted there and Rama gave leave to the celestial car to return to its original owner Kubera. Bharata said again to Rama: "My mother has been honoured: the kingdom that was given to me, I give back to you." Rama accepted the kingdom.

The brothers bathed, had their matted hair properly dressed, and put on costly clothes and ornaments. The women attended to Sita's toilet. Kausalya personally attended to the monkey-ladies. Satrughna asked Sumantra to bring the chariot; Rama mounted it and entered the city; Bharata held the reins of the horses, Satrughna the parasol, and Lakshmana the fly-whisk; Vibhishana stood in front with another fly-whisk; Sugriva came mounted on the royal elephant, Satrunjaya. Rama, as he came, spoke to the citizens and ministers of the friendship of Sugriva, the might of Hanuman, the exploits of the monkeys and the alliance with Vibhishana. Then entering the palace of the Ikshvakus, Rama asked Bharata to lodge Sugriva in the royal mansion. At Sugriva's command, four monkeys left with golden pots to fetch, before morning, water from the four seas for the coronation. Satrughna informed their preceptor Vasishtha that everything was ready for the ceremony.

The austere Vasishtha then seated Rama, together with Sità, on a jewelled seat; and Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Jabali, Kasyapa, Katyayana, Suyajna, Gautama and Vijaya poured the fragrant coronation water on Rama; then the priests, Brahmans, maidens, ministers, army-chiefs and the representatives of guilds anointed Rama; then Vasishtha placed on Rama's head the hoary crown which Manu, the son of the Sun himself, first wore; at Indra's instance, the Wind-god presented Rama with a gold lotus garland and another garland of pearls. When worthy Rama was coronated, the heavens sang and danced, earth put forth her choicest crops and fruits, and flowers smelt more fragrant.

Rama distributed among all lavish presents of cattle, gold, and garments. To Sugriva, he gave a gold gem-set garland; to Angada, he gave a pair of gem-set armlets; a necklace of pearls and gems, he gave to Sita. Sita gave clothes and ornaments to Hanuman and taking the pearl necklace presented by her lord, thought for a while and conferred it on Hanuman as its fittest recipient. To the other monkeys, too, Rama made suitable presentations.

Rama then asked Lakshmana to become the Crown Prince. Despite Rama's persuasion and even his order, Lakshmana would not accept the honour; thereupon Rama installed Bharata as heir apparent.

Rama reigned long, performing many sacrifices, attended by lavish gifts. With long arms and high shoulders, Rama, along with Lakshmana, protected the world.

Rama Rajya (Rama's Reign)[1]

While Rama ruled, no widowed woman wailed; there was no fear of disease; the world was free from thieves; calamity touched none; elders did not perform the obsequies of the younger ones; everything was happy; everyone was righteously inclined, and with their thoughts

[1] This is the ideal that Gandhi frequently spoke of.

on Rama, people refrained from mutual injury; free from ailments or sorrow, they lived long. "Rama, Rama, Rama,"—so did they go on speaking of him; the world became one Rama; trees grew luxuriantly and put forth their flowers and fruits in season and out of season; there were timely rains; contented, each with its duties, all classes were free from avarice.

THE EPIC[1]

This blessed first poem, composed of yore by the seer Valmiki, bestows fame, long life and success; he who reads or listens to it is freed from sin; women will have sons like Rama, Lakshmana and Bharata; he who listens to it with faith and without anger overcomes all difficulties; malignant spirits are subdued wherever a copy of the poem is kept; Rama, who is the eternal Lord Vishnu, is pleased with him who reads or listens to this Ramayana fully; domestic welfare, increase in wealth, success in undertakings, brotherhood, knowledge and happiness result from listening to it. Such is this ancient story; well be it with you all; recite it freely; let the Lord's might increase. And they who copy with devotion this epic of Rama composed by the sage or cause it to be copied, they abide for ever in heaven.

[1] What follows is called *Phala-sruti,* a recital of the fruits accruing from studying or listening to the Epic. This characteristic of Sanskrit Epics and mythological stories has its parallel in Irish tradition also. See Myles Dillon, *The Archaism of Irish Tradition* (The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture, British Academy, 1947, London, page 5): "Now this reward for hearing a venerable story is also known in Ireland and in a very similar form. At the end of the curious mythological tale called "The Fosterage of the Houses of Two Methers," which belongs in its extant form to the Middle Irish period, we are told that many rewards are in store for those who recite it or hear it recited—children, safety on a voyage at sea, success in legal disputes and in hunting, peace in the banqueting hall; if prisoners hear the story, it will be as though their bonds were loosed. One of the three 'wonders' of *Tain Bo Cualnge* is that he who hears it recited will enjoy a year's protection."

UTTARA KANDA (THE LATER STORY)[1]

Soon after the coronation, the sages of the forests called on Rama; Agastya, as their spokesman, congratulated Rama on his victory and narrated the story of Ravana, his ancestry, his early penance and acquisition of divine boons, his subsequent conquests, his acts of violence against gods and sages, and his crimes against virtuous women and the consequent curses which he brought upon himself. Agastya told him, similarly, the individual stories and exploits of the other members of Ravana's family and the early life of the great monkeys, Valin, Sugriva and Hanuman.

The sages then took leave; one by one, the important guests who had come for the coronation took their ceremonious departures. With one voice they said: "Rama, the qualities of your mind and your valour are wonderful indeed; but the invariable sweetness of your behaviour is something which comes from the great God alone." As they were saying this, Hanuman told Rama with respect: "May my affection and devotion to you stand for all time, Rama; may my breath inhabit this body as long as your story is current in the world; and may celestial damsels sing the divine story of yours in my ears." "So be it,"[2] said Rama, and added: "For every single act of assistance on your part, I owe you my life; but may all the help that you rendered be dis-

[1] While customary religious readings and recitals of the epic stop with Rama's coronation (Book VI) the Later Story (Book VII) has been part of the epic narrative from very early times; Kalidasa devotes some of the moving cantos of his epic poem on the Dynasty of the Raghus (Raghuvamsa) to this Later Story; the celebrated dramatist Bhavabhuti (*Circa* 700 A.D.) bases on it his play Uttara Rama Charita in which he is rightly deemed to have excelled in the depiction of pathos; according to the critic Anandavardhana (9th century A.D.) it would form the very climax of the theme of the epic.

[2] Such is the belief till this day that wherever the Ramayana is recited, Hanuman is present, and to that effect, a verse is always uttered at the beginning of the recital.

solved within myself; for, to return similar help would mean similar calamities for you." With streaming eyes, stupefied by sadness, and mechanically, with distracted minds, they all left Rama.

Rama repaired every day to the grove of Asoka trees in his own palace and there spent his time happily with Sita. Years rolled on, and one afternoon when Rama was with Sita in his private apartments, he found to his joy that Sita was pregnant. "You are to bear a child to me now; tell me what desire or yearning is uppermost in your mind; I shall have it fulfilled," said Rama. Sita smiled and replied: "I desire to see again the sanctifying hermitages of the sages; my keenest yearning now is to spend at least one night in the forest hermitage." "You shall go tomorrow itself," replied Rama and went from there to the central court of the palace.

Abandonment of Sita

There King Rama was surrounded by the story-tellers and jesters of the court. As they were telling their stories and anecdotes, Rama suddenly asked: "What tales go about in the city regarding me? Kings are open to criticism." One of them, Bhadra, said that appreciative tales were going round; but Rama asked: "Tell me the truth; tell me both the good and the bad that they say; the good I will pursue, and the bad I will eschew. Tell me freely, not only what people in general say, but also what the evil-minded ones say." Bhadra then uttered most cautiously and with the utmost reverence: "They praise the impossible feats of damming the sea and killing the demon, but add, 'We do not know what happiness Rama enjoys with Sita whom Ravana forcibly carried off and kept in his custody; we too will have to put up with such things in respect of our women; as the King, so the subjects!'"

Rama dismissed his companions and asked for Lak-

shmana, Bharata and Satrughna: "Call them quickly, they are my life; they are my breaths." As they entered Rama's presence, they found him like the moon in eclipse; tears covered his face, like dew on a lotus. Rama embraced them and drew them to seats near him, and said: "You are everything to me, you are my life; you rule the kingdom, which I merely look after; you are learned and intelligent; you must now confer on a matter pertaining to me. Listen to the talk in which the people are indulging about me and Sita. It did strike me that I should not bring her back here, without public purification in fire; and you know, Lakshmana, the Fire-god in the presence of all declared Sita stainless, and my own inner self told me that she was pure; and now there is evil gossip among the people; I am so afraid of calumny that I will even abandon my life or you, not to mention Sita. Lakshmana, tomorrow, at daybreak, take Sita in the chariot and leave her on the other shore of the Ganga, near the hermitage of the great sage Valmiki, by the side of the river Tamasa; obey me; if any of you thwart me in this, you will have committed an act of disobedience against me. Sita has already expressed to me her longing to see the hermitages on the banks of the Ganga." Having delivered himself of these words, Rama retired with his brothers, but tears obstructed his vision and as he went, the panting of his breath was heard as loud as that of an elephant.

Next morning Lakshmana asked Sumantra to prepare the chariot with a comfortable seat arranged therein for Sita, so that he might carry out the King's command. Sita was exhilarated at the quick fulfilment of her longing to visit the hermitages. On the further shore of the Ganga, Lakshmana told Sita with folded hands and tears: "Death would be welcome, not a mission of this kind, which the whole world would decry; please, do not attach any blame to me." With these words, Lakshmana

fell prostrate. Sita bade him speak out. Lakshmana said: "To all that the King feels in his heart, I cannot give expression before you; you, who are immaculate, have been abandoned by the King; it is out of fear of the people's slander, and you should not take it in any other light; here is the holy and beautiful penance-grove and here dwells the famous Valmiki, a friend of our father, and here may you live under his care, devoting yourself to austerities."

Sita fell unconscious on hearing these cruel words; after a time she told Lakshmana sorrowfully: "Lakshmana, this body of mine has been created only for grief; what shall I tell the sages as the cause of my banishment by Rama? I would give up my life in these waters of the Ganga but for the seed of the royal line in my womb; obey the King and leave me here, but take this message to him that he should love his subjects as his own brothers, for thereby does foremost fame accrue; I do not complain about my fate, for I have, even be it with my very life, to carry out my husband's desire; but before you return, note that I am pregnant."

Lakshmana could not speak; he prostrated himself before her, crossed the Ganga and returned in the chariot; as he went, he turned frequently and saw on the farther shore Sita throwing herself to this side and that in grief and looking at his receding chariot.

"Worshipful Sire, the wife of somebody, looking verily like the Goddess of Fortune or some Goddess fallen from heaven, is bitterly weeping nearby; hardly deserving of this misery, that pitiable lady desires protection," so did young hermits inform the sage Valmiki. The sage concentrated his thought, saw the whole event in his mind, ran to where poor Sita was and told her in endearing words: "Welcome, O daughter-in-law of Dasaratha, Rama's beloved Queen, Janaka's daughter! I have seen everything in my contemplation; I know you are

free from all stain; now that you are with me, be at rest; the ladies of the hermitage will look after you as their daughter; come." Valmiki took Sita to his hermitage where the ladies welcomed her.

Lakshmana returned to Rama and found him sitting in sorrow and tears. Lakshmana consoled his brother: "Persons of your calibre sorrow not; all union ends in separation, even as all life ends in death; hence one ought not to develop too much attachment towards sons, wives, friends or one's possessions, since separation from them is certain. As far as the gossip of the people is concerned, that will not be abated by Sita's departure; they will say something else now; men of your stamp ought not to be perturbed on that score; give up this weakness and be firm." "So is it, O excellent man! Your wonderful words console me and I feel relieved; a friend like you is not easily found," said Rama.

Satrughna

After a time, some sages living on the banks of the Yamuna visited Rama and requested him to complete the work of removing the Rakshasas by destroying the demon Lavana infesting the Madhu forest on the banks of the Yamuna. Satrughna longed for the exploit of killing Lavana, and Rama crowned him as king over Lavana's territory and sent him on the expedition.

Birth of Rama's Sons

On the way Satrughna passed through Valmiki's hermitage and told the sage that he desired to spend the night there. The sage smiled and said, "Stay; this is the home of Rama's family!" That very night, Sita gave birth to twin sons. Valmiki saw the brilliant twins and performed the rites for their welfare, bestowed a talisman on them and called them Kusa and Lava. Satrughna heard of the event and greeting Sita as mother, expressed his joy.

Next morning Satrughna left on his expedition and shot Lavana down with the arrow given by Rama. He then built the city of Madhupuri or Madhura,[1] stayed there as ruler for twelve years and then started back to Ayodhya. On the way, he halted at Valmiki's hermitage. There Satrughna listened to Rama's story, composed by Valmiki, and recited to the accompaniment of sweet music and the lute. When he heard the events as they had happened, tears gushed into his eyes, he sighed and was beside himself with grief. The followers of Satrughna heard and exclaimed: "What is this, where are we, are we witnessing a dream set to music?"

On the morrow, with Valmiki's leave, Satrughna left for Ayodhya. Meeting Rama, he exclaimed that he could no longer live alone; upon which Rama said that the life of a ruler was to be guided by public duty rather than by private inclination, and that Satrughna might from time to time pay him a visit.

It was then decided to perform the grand sacrifice of Asvamedha[2] in the Naimisa forest on the banks of the Gomati, where sheds and tents were raised for the rites and the visitors. The Asvamedha required the presence of the Queen and Rama installed, instead of Sita's own person, a golden image of her. As the sacrifice began, Rama's charity also began and for a period of over a year, when the sacrificial session went on, it was one

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[1] Modern Mathura.

[2] Asvamedha, the horse-sacrifice, was the greatest of the sacrifices performed by kings of ancient India; its performance was a symbol of sovereignty which was signified by the unchallenged and unimpeded progress of the sacrificial horse which was taken round the country for the period of a year by some guards and soliders of the King. Great spiritual merit and the common good of the people were also counted among the fruits of this sacrifice. As several inscriptions and coins show, this sacrifice was performed by Indian kings of the historical times also. The horse-sacrifice was Indo-European in its history and antiquity. On its esoteric significance, see above p. 96, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

continuous sound of "Give! Give!" As this wonderful sacrifice was in session, the sage Valmiki too arrived there with his pupils and took his abode in huts in the quarters of the sages.

THE RECITAL OF THE RAMAYANA

Valmiki called his two pupils Kusa and Lava and said: "Go and recite joyously the whole story of the Ramayana; sing in the quarters of the sages and kings, in the roads and in front of Rama's palace, especially where the sacrificial rites are being performed by the priests. I give you these fruits grown on mountain tops and as you chew them while singing, all strain will disappear; if Rama should invite you, you should go and sing to him; sing twenty cantos a day; mark you, you should not show the slightest desire for wealth, for we are residents of forest-hermitages; if Rama asks who you are, tell him that you are Valmiki's pupils; here, take these lutes, tune them well and sing sweetly; sing from the beginning and do not slight the King."

Next morning the two pupils of Valmiki sang the Epic according to their teacher's directions. Rama heard that new musical composition rendered without any flaw by the two boys. Rama called the learned men adept in manifold lores, proficient in arts and letters, to come and listen to the recital of the boys. As Rama sat there and the two boys sang, the gathering alternately looked at the King and the youngsters and observed in surprise that the two boys looked like two images sprung from Rama. The rhapsody seemed in truth to come from another world and none among the listeners was satiated. At the end of the very first twenty cantos, Rama ordered that the boys be given eighteen thousand pieces of gold, and when all the gold came before them, the boys smiled and asked of what use that gold was to them who lived on fruits and roots in the forest-hermitages; the gathering was astonished to hear this reply; Rama

thereupon asked the boys the history of the Epic, its author, its extent and other points. "Valmiki, the Bhargava sage, is its author; he has come to this sacrifice; twenty-four thousand verses form its extent; if we have your leave, we shall sing the whole poem." Rama expressed his desire to listen. The recital went on from day to day and gradually it became evident from the poem that the two young minstrels were none other than Sita's sons. Thereupon Rama sent some of his messengers of unsullied behaviour to the venerable Valmiki with the message that, with the sage's leave, Sita might return on the next day and declare her purity in the midst of that gathering. He asked them to ascertain the minds of both the sage and Sita in the matter. "Let it be as Rama says, for he is Sita's lord and god," said Valmiki in reply. The sages and kings assembled approved of the proposal and applauded Rama for the decision.

The sacrificial enclosure was full on the morning with sages, Brahmans, kings, monkeys and Rakshasas. The gathering sat motionless as stone. The sage entered, Sita following him, looking like Brahma followed by the *Veda*. Valmiki addressed Rama: "Sita abandoned by you in the proximity of my hermitage, out of your fear of the gossip of the people, will now prove, with your leave, her chastity; I say in truth, these twins, the sons of Sita, are your offspring; Rama, I am the tenth son of God Varuna, and I do not remember having spoken anything false; I have done penance for numberless years, and let me not enjoy its fruit if she has committed any sin by thought, deed or word; Rama, I have taken her into my hermitage, after satisfying myself of her purity." "So be it," said Rama to the sage.

Sita, who was in orange robes, said with folded hands and downcast look: "If in my mind I have no thought of anyone but Rama, let the Goddess Earth open and receive me into her bosom; if I adore Rama

with mind, body and speech, let Goddess Earth receive me into her bosom; if my word that I know none but Rama is true, let Goddess Earth receive me into her bosom." As Sita swore thus, this miracle happened: from out of the womb of the earth rose a grand divine throne borne on the hoods of the powerful serpent and seated on it was Goddess Earth; the Goddess clasped Sita in her arms, and took her into her womb. There was a shower of flowers from the gods who praised Sita's character; the whole gathering at the sacrificial enclosure stood spellbound; resting on a staff and downcast, Rama sat plunged in grief; suddenly he exclaimed with anger and tears: "O Goddess Earth! Let Sita be returned to me, or you will witness my wrath; or take me also in." God Brahma, who was witnessing the scene with the gods, bade Rama not to torment himself, reminded him of his original divine status as Vishnu and the mission on which he had come, and assured him that Sita and he would be reunited in His own heaven. Then Brahma praised Valmiki's Epic, the first and best of all poems, and Rama as the best of all heroes fit to be the theme of epic poems and departed with the gods.

Rama returned to Ayodhya, and subsequently performed more sacrifices, in all of which the golden image of Sita was always by his side.

After a time, the Queen mothers passed away. Yudhajit, King of the Kekayas and uncle of Bharata, then sent his preceptor to Rama with the proposal that Rama should conquer the Sailushas on the banks of the Sindhu (Indus) and build up his new kingdom at the city of the Gandharas. Rama accordingly sent Bharata with his two sons Taksha and Pushkala; Bharata vanquished the enemies, established Taksha at Takshasila (Taxila) and Pushkala at Pushkalavata,[1] and returned

[1] The Peukelaotis of the Greeks which was still the Gandhara capital at the time of Alexander's invasion.

to Ayodhya. For the two sons of Lakshmana, Rama raised two new cities in the land of Karupatha and established them as kings there, Angada at Angadiya and Chandraketu at Chandrakanta.

The Departure

The time had come for the departure of all the brothers; Lakshmana repaired to the banks of the Sarayu and there gave up his life by *Yoga*. Rama desired to lay the kingdom on Bharata's shoulders and depart. But Bharata proposed instead that Rama's sons Kusa and Lava be installed as Kings. Kusa was established at Kusavati and Lava at Sravasti. Rama then sent word to Satrughna of his resolve to depart. The citizens of Ayodhya represented to Rama that they would never leave him and that they too would follow him wherever he went. Satrughna established his two sons Subahu and Satrughatin at Madhura and Vaidisa and came to Ayodhya. Sugriva at the head of the monkeys came and also Vibhishana. Vibhishana and Hanuman, Rama said, would stay on in the world as immortals as long as his story, the Ramayana, lasted; to others, like Jambavan, Rama also indicated a period of further sojourn on earth. Then accompanied by all of them, Rama started on the last rite of the great departure (*Mahaprasthana*), with sacred grass in hand and silently repeating the supreme *mantras*. Whoever heard of it and followed, whichever living being saw Rama going, all of them attained heaven. They all reached the waters of the Sarayu, immersed themselves therein, and welcomed by Brahma, attained heaven.

This is the Epic Ramayana, adored by God Brahma himself, in which is established Lord Vishnu whose personality pervades the entire static and mobile universe, the Epic which destroys all sins, confers all fortune and is indeed equal to the *Vedas*. Even a quarter of a verse of it, nay even a word, brings salvation.

II. THE MAHABHARATA

ADI (THE BEGINNING)

INTRODUCTORY

After bowing to Lord Narayana and Nara,[1] Sarasvati the Goddess of speech and learning, and Vyasa the author, one should recite this epic, entitled *Jaya* (the Victorious).

Ugrasravas, son of Suta Romaharshana[2], the reciter of the Puranas, came to Saunaka, head of the hermitage at the Naimisa forest, during an important twelve-year sacrifice which he was performing, and at the request of the sages assembled there recited the great epic Mahabharata composed by the foremost sage Dvaipayana Vyasa, as he heard it recited by the composer's own pupil, the sage Vaisampayana, to King Janamejaya, son of Parikshit, in the snake-sacrifice conducted by that King.[3]

THE EPIC

By virtue of his penance and spiritual discipline, Vyasa arranged in order the eternal Vedas and then composed this holy epic, concentrating his mental powers and seeing the course of its development through the force of his virtue and knowledge. The blessed sage set forth here the greatness of Lord Vasudeva, the righteousness of the Pandavas and the villainy of the sons of

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[1] Lord Narayana and Nara, as sages representing God and Man as brothers, are engaged in eternal penance at the Badari hermitage; the former is Krishna and the latter, Arjuna, the third of the Pandava brothers of this epic.

[2] See above, Introduction p. xliii.

[3] For Parikshit, see the Bhagavata below. To avenge the serpent Takshaka, biting and killing Parikshit, the latter's son Janamejaya performed a sacrifice of serpents (*sarpa-satra*).

Dhritarashtra. Duryodhana is like a huge tree of intolerant anger of which the senseless Dhritarashtra is the root; Yudhishthira is the giant tree of righteousness of which the root is Krishna, the Supreme Being, and those who have realised Him. Poets cannot excel this epic; in fact, they will have to draw upon it for their own creative activity; it is verily the pabulum of all future writers; it is indeed a delight to the mental eye of a world blinded by the darkness of ignorance and bound in the meshes of its own acts. The eternal Lord is sung of here; He is Truth and the Moral Order, the Supreme Brahman and the Everlasting Light; Truth and Immortality are the body of the Bharata epic; it is indeed the Veda of Vyasa, and is called Mahabharata, because it is great (*mahat*) and weighty (*bharavat*); it is at once a treatise on the principles of material welfare, righteous conduct, emotional gratification and spiritual realisation. What is here is found elsewhere; what is not here is not to be found anywhere.

The Author

Satyavati, a daughter of Uparichara Vasu, King of the Chedis and of the Paurava line, was brought up in the house of a fisherman on the banks of the Yamuna. Once she was rowing her foster-father's boat when the sage Parasara, son of Sakti, saw her and on an island in the river made her the mother of his son named Krishna Dvaipayana,[1] who took to penance, became celebrated as the codifier of the Vedas and composed this epic.

The Genealogy

From Lord Brahma, Marichi was born as one of the progenitors; Marichi's son was Kasyapa; Vivasvan was the son of Kasyapa; to Vivasvan was born Manu and to Manu, Ila; of her, Pururavas was born; to him Ayus;

[1] Krishna born on the island (*dvipa*).

Ayus was the father of Nahusha and the latter of Yayati; Yayati's sons were Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu, Anu and Puru. Puru, after whom his line was named Paurava, begot Janamejaya; Janamejaya's son was Prachinvan; the fifteenth from him was Dushyanta who married Sakuntala and begot Bharata,[1] after whom the line was named Bharata; his great-grandson was Hastin who built the capital of the dynasty of Hastinapura; the fourth from him was Kuru, who gave the line the name Kaurava; the fifth descendant of Kuru was Parisravas *alias* Pratipa.

THE MAIN STORY

BHISHMA

Of the three sons of Pratipa, the second one was named Santanu because the touch of his hand could restore youth to an old man; Santanu succeeded Pratipa as King and married Ganga,[2] but she would act as she pleased, would brook no opposition and would leave him the moment she was thwarted or rebuked. Seven godlike sons she bore him and every one of them she cast into the waters of the Ganga. When she was about to fling the eighth son too into the Ganga, Santanu called her an infanticide and the perpetrator of a despicable sin. Ganga replied: "I spare you this son, but I myself have to end my life here forthwith; I am Ganga, who came to you for a divine purpose; these eight sons are the eight divine beings, Vasus; the last of them will remain with you." She then disappeared.

Named Devavrata[3] and Gangeya,[4] the surviving son learnt all the branches of knowledge, imbibing military

[1] The story of Dushyanta and Sakuntala forms the theme of the famous drama of Kalidasa, the Abhijnana Sakuntala; its translation into English by Sir William Jones in 1789 forms a landmark in the history of Indian studies in the West.

[2] The Goddess of the holy river of that name.

[3] Of Godly vows.

[4] Son of Ganga.

science from Jamadagnya Parasurama[1] himself.

Once when he had gone to the forest along the banks of the Yamuna, Santanu met the fisherman's daughter rowing her boat and desired to marry her. Her foster-father, the fisherman, agreed to give her on condition that the son born to her would succeed him as King. Unable to consent to this, the King returned to Hastinapura but his lovelorn condition was too patent. His son Devavrata elicited the full facts from his father's charioteer, rode out to meet the fisherman, and himself asked Satyavati's hand on behalf of his father, declaring to him in all solemnity: "Listen to these words of mine; you will hardly find another like me to speak such words; her son will become King." The fisherman replied: "But I have a doubt about your issue who may not acquiesce in this arrangement." Devavrata then made a more terrible declaration: "Let sages, gods and all beings witness this promise of mine; I have already renounced the kingdom; now, to ensure this in future with respect to my heirs, I take this vow; as long as life lasts in me, I will be continent and I will have no heirs." The heavens applauded with a shower of flowers and called him "Bhishma," the "Terrible," the name by which he became celebrated from the time of his vow of celibacy in youth. The fisherman agreed; Santanu was unhappy for a long time about the course that his son had taken; he conferred on him the boon that he would live as long as he pleased, and that Death would approach him only when he desired to depart.

Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura

To Santanu and Satyavati were born Chitrangada and Vichitravirya; after Santanu's ascent to heaven, Bhishma made Chitrangada King. In a battle at Kuru-

[1] For him, see the Ramayana, above and the Bhagavata below pp. 160-1 and 378.

kshetra between Chitrangada and a Gandharva King of the same name, the former fell. Thereupon Bhishma placed on the throne the younger brother Vichitravirya, who was then but a boy. When Vichitravirya came of age, Bhishma went on his behalf to the *Svayamvara*[1] held by the King of Kasi (Banaras) for the marriage of his three daughters, Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, and brought them by force, overcoming the opposition of the kings assembled there. The eldest Princess Amba had already chosen King Salva in her mind, and when she spoke what was in her heart, Bhishma rightly decided not to take her;[2] the other two princesses were married by Vichitravirya. Vichitravirya wasted his life in enjoyment, became a prey to consumption and passed away. Sage Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa blessed Vichitravirya's Queens with offspring; Ambika gave birth to Dhritarashtra, Ambalika to Pandu, and a female attendant of the former, to Vidura; Dhritarashtra was born blind Pandu was so called after his whitish complexion, and Vidura, meaning the wise, was the incarnation of Dharma (Righteousness).

After a time Dhritarashtra was crowned, but as he was blind, Pandu was made King; Vidura, whose wisdom was evident even in boyhood, became his minister. Bhishma then thought of the marriage of the princes.

[1] *Svayamvara* is a free choice which princesses made in a gathering of princes called for that purpose. This form of marriage was permissible only to Kshatriyas.

[2] When Amba went to Salva he refused to take her as she had been won by valour for another prince. She then performed a terrible penance for destroying Bhishma. God Kumara gave her an unfading garland which she offered to any Kshatriya who would undertake to kill Bhishma. When no Kshatriya came forward, Amba hung the garland at the gate of King Drupada's palace and ran away. Drupada's first offspring, who was first a female and then became a male warrior, took that garland against the father's warning. It was this half-male warrior, Sikhandin by name, who served later in the great battle as a means of removing Bhishma from the fight.

Sakuni, son of the Gandhara King Subala, offered his sister Gandhari to Dhritarashtra; Gandhari was so virtuous that, to prevent the growth of any aversion towards her blind husband, she herself donned a permanent eye-band. Sura, the Yadava Chief and father of Vasudeva, offered his daughter Kunti, also called Pritha, to Pandu; Bhishma also gave him the Princess of the Madra country, Madri, as a second wife. Devaka, Vasudeva's father-in-law, had a daughter by a non-Kshatriya wife who was given in marriage to Vidura.

THE PANDAVAS AND THE DHARTARASHTRAS[1]

While yet young, Kunti had served the sage Durvasas and secured from him a boon whereby any God she invoked would come and bless her with a child. Pandu was delighted to hear of this boon and asked Kunti to invoke first Dharma, the god of righteousness, and give the Kuru race a renowned son who would be, in every part of his being, an embodiment of Dharma; Kunti did accordingly and her first son Yudhishthira,[2] the foremost of the righteous, was born. Pandu then asked her to invoke the powerful Wind-god, Vayu, and thereby the son, Bhima, of terrible prowess, was born. Similarly Indra, the King of the Gods, was invoked and the son Arjuna, as powerful as Siva and as pleasing as Vishnu, was born. Kunti extended to Madri too the benefits of her divine boon, and as Madri thought of the twin-gods, Asvins,[3] she had twin sons, Nakula and Sahadeva, endowed with incomparable beauty.

Gandhari, who was the first to conceive, produced a hundred sons; they were all born simultaneously as one

[1] The sons of Pandu are referred to as Pandavas, and those of Dhritarashtra as Dhartarashtras; though both belonged to the race of Kuru and were thus Kauravas, the name Kaurava is applied usually in a restricted sense to the latter.

[2] Firm in battle.

[3] The Asvins are the heavenly physicians and gods renowned for their personal charm.

amorphous mass which was put into a vessel of clarified butter; out of that mass, the hundred sons emerged one after the other in the course of a hundred days; the first of them, Duryodhana, was born on the same night as Bhima; Duryodhana brayed like an ass as he came forth, and everybody including Vidura advised his abandonment, as he portended the annihilation of the whole race: but Dhritarashtra was too fond of this son. Over and above these hundred sons, Dhritarashtra had a daughter, Dussala, whom later Jayadratha, King of the Sindhus, married, and also a son Yuyutsu by a non-Kshatriya wife.

The Vrishnis and Yadavas heard of the birth of sons to Kunti and rejoiced; Vasudeva sent their preceptor Kasyapa to perform the sacraments[1] of the children. The five sons of Pandu learnt the art of war from Sukra: Bhima became famous with the mace, and Arjuna with the bow, being capable of shooting with both hands.

One day, Pandu roamed the forests during the intoxicating spring season, accompanied by Madri alone and there, in the midst of his pleasures, he suddenly collapsed and breathed his last. Kunti and her sons rushed to the scene; Madri died with her husband. Then after the cremation, which was performed with the help of the sages of the forest, Kunti and the five Pandavas returned to Hastinapura.

Boyhood and the Growth of Ill Feeling

The sons of Pandu and Dhritarashtra then grew up together; in all the sports of their boyhood, the Pandavas outshone their cousins; Bhima particularly was a terror to the hundred sons of his uncle, for singly he overpowered all of them; the feats which he performed by

[1] For sacraments *Samskaras*, see above p. 125.

means of his superior prowess aroused their jealousy. Duryodhana began to plot against his life and was always looking for an opportunity to do away with him; once, while bathing, when Bhima fell asleep with fatigue on the bank, Duryodhana rolled him over into the river, and then placed poisonous snakes on him. At another time Duryodhana, on the advice of his uncle Sakuni, poisoned Bhima's food, but nothing could avail against the latter, so extraordinary was his strength.

Drona: the Teacher

The Pandavas thereafter became careful and though they were powerful enough to deal with Duryodhana, they kept quiet on the advice of their uncle Vidura. Bhishma then placed all the hundred and five youths under the teacher, Drona, son of the sage Bharadvaja and pupil of Parasurama, for instruction in archery. Drona taught them the use of manifold missiles, human and divine; of all the pupils, Arjuna stood foremost in his devotion to the teacher as well as in his skill in archery. Drona gave him rare and formidable missiles and foretold that he would become an archer without equal in the world. A tournament was arranged in which the Princes exhibited their skill, dexterity, fineness of execution, and firm hold; archery, sword-play, horse-riding, chariot-driving, in all these their proficiency excited the acclamation of the onlookers. Drona himself then desired that the gathering should see Arjuna, dearer to him than his own son, perform his feats; as he entered the amphitheatre, the crowds went into raptures.

Karna

When Arjuna had gratified them with the marvels of his archery there was a commotion at the gates and soon Karna appeared on the field. Karna was a son of Kunti herself; in the curiosity of youth, she had invoked, with the aid of the boon of the sage Durvasas, the Sun-

God, who appeared before her and presented her with a son, Karna, born with a panoply and a pair of earrings. Kunti, however, placed him in a basket and let him down into the river, where he was picked up and adopted by Radha and her husband Adhiratha, the charioteer, as their own child.

Karna offered to improve upon what Arjuna had done, and remarked that Arjuna need not feel proud of his skill. There was a sudden upheaval in the audience, and Duryodhana leaped with joy; Karna equalled the feats performed by Arjuna; Duryodhana embraced him, welcomed him as the redeemer of their prestige, invited him to be one of themselves and to help them put down their adversaries. He ennobled him by creating him King of Anga. Karna and Duryodhana embraced each other and Karna swore undying friendship to Duryodhana. The advent of Karna removed fear of Arjuna from Duryodhana's heart.

Yudhishthira as Crown Prince: Further Growth of Jealousy

Dhritarashtra then found Yudhishthira fit to undertake the task of ruling the kingdom and made him heir apparent, though this was greatly disliked by his son Duryodhana. Yudhishthira was endowed with truth and sympathy and the subjects applauded him. Drona then told Arjuna, embracing him: "I myself am not equal to you, wherefore another in this world? The only person superior to you, I must now reveal to you, is Krishna, the Lord who makes and unmakes the world; He is the past, present and future of the universe; He is born as your cousin and will become your intimate friend, and with you as His aid, He shall fulfil the mission of this incarnation of His; take your refuge in Him." Arjuna went forth and scored victories over several kings and brought home fame and booty. All this excited the jealousy of Duryodhana who represented his feelings to

his father; he advised the King to send the Pandavas, without hesitation, into exile at Varanavata. Duryodhana, Sakuni, his uncle, and Karna conferred and sought the advice of Kanika Bharadvaja, who supported them by expatiating on the thesis that politics and scruples were far apart.[1] They further conferred with Dussasana, another brother of Duryodhana, and hatched a plot to burn the Pandavas to death with their mother Kunti.

The Plot and the Escape

Duryodhana scattered money among the people, honoured them and strove to win them over to his side; some of his agents described to the Pandavas the beauty of Varanavata and the festival of Siva there; their curiosity was aroused and Yudhishthira asked Dhritarashtra's leave to go to Varanavata. Before Yudhishthira left, Duryodhana sent his minister Purochana with orders to erect a grand residence on the outskirts of Varanavata to accommodate the Pandavas, and to store in the building various combustible materials such as hemp, oil, lac and wood, and then to set fire to the residence while the Pandavas were asleep. But Vidura, who suspected the plot, gave a message to his nephew Yudhishthira: "He survives who protects himself, knowing that fire which burns everything else, cannot burn those hidden underground." Yudhishthira understood the inner meaning of Vidura's message.

At Varanavata, Purochana received them into his treacherous house made of lac; pretending to be ignorant and credulous, the Pandavas, with the aid of a digger sent by Vidura, excavated a subterranean passage from the centre of the house. Then, during the night, Bhima himself set fire to the house beneath the room where Purochana was asleep and the brothers with their mother

[1] Records of his views can be found also in the famous Sanskrit treatise on polity, the Artha Sastra of Kautilya (4th century B.C.).

escaped through the tunnel. The far-sighted Vidura had posted at the outer end of the passage a reliable guide who, torch in hand, helped them to cross the Ganga and enter the forests. At Hastinapura, while Duryodhana and others of his side rejoiced that the Pandavas had perished in the fire, Bhishma, Vidura and others rejoiced that the Pandavas had escaped. Among the people, some said that the Pandavas had perished, and others, that they were alive.

Marriage with Draupadi

Honoured by the citizens, the brothers lived at a place called Ekachakra in the guise of Brahmans. One day, a Brahman visitor told them of the *Svayamvara* that King Drupada of the Panchalas was about to hold for his daughter Draupadi; upon hearing this news, Kunti and her sons decided to start for Drupada's capital.

At Drupada's capital, a vast concourse of princes was gathering for the *Svayamvara*. The Pandavas arrived and made their abode in a potter's house. The sons of Dhritarashtra came with Karna; the Vrishnis too came with Krishna and Balarama; sages and Brahmans also came; without taking their seats with the Kshatriyas on the stalls, the Pandavas sat among the Brahmans; none knew them, but from a distance their cousin Krishna recognised them and informed his brother Balarama. Amidst music, Draupadi appeared, garland in hand, led by her brother Dhrishtadyumna. The prince announced: "Here is the bow, this the target above; whoever bends the bow and hits the target, wins my sister Draupadi." Every prince jumped up thinking that Draupadi was his, but soon sank back in his seat, unable even to string the bow. Sisupala of the Chedis, Jarasandha of Magadha and Duryodhana, tried, but the impact of the bow flung them on their backs; and Karna fared no better.

When the royal ranks sat in frustration, there arose

from among the Brahmans the noble Arjuna; there was jubilation among the Brahmans as he went ahead; he went round[1] the bow, made obeisance to Lord Siva, thought of Krishna and took it up; in a moment, he strung it and hit the target; heavenly flowers fell on him; the orchestra blared; Draupadi walked forward, her face radiant, her feet tremulous and her eyes eloquent. She threw the garland of *Svayamvara* on Arjuna's neck; the angry crowd of princes attacked Drupada, but Bhima and Arjuna faced them and drove them away; the victorious brothers walked out of the arena with Draupadi.

Coming home, the Pandavas announced to their mother that they had secured alms for the day, and as usual, the mother said that all five of them should share what they had secured, not knowing that what they had obtained that day was Draupadi, won by Arjuna. But Yudhishthira remembered the words that the sage Vyasa told them when he met them on their way to the *Svayamvara*, that they would secure a wife to be shared by all in common. Just then Krishna arrived with Balarama and saluted their aunt Kunti and congratulated his cousins on their escape from Varanavata and the acquisition of Draupadi and then departed. Dhrishtadyumna, son of Drupada, stealthily watched the brothers at the potter's house and brought the happy news to his father: "Father, the bright-eyed youth, that godlike figure in deerskin, is Arjuna!" Drupada then sent his priest and brought the brothers and Kunti to his palace to celebrate the marriage of his daughter to the five brothers. Through his spies, Duryodhana learnt of the safety of the Pandavas and their marriage and after consulting Sakuni, he, Karna and Jayadratha, attacked Drupada but were rebuffed. With a mighty army, Krishna and Balarama arrived at the Panchala capital and spent a happy time

[1] Going round or circumambulation, *Pradakshina,* is an act of reverence.

with the newly married Pandavas.

THE RETURN AND THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Dhritarashtra was inwardly sympathetic towards his son; but to all outward appearance, he accepted the words of Vidura and conducted himself in a becoming manner. Duryodhana expatiated on the manifold ways by which they could destroy the Pandavas, but his old father accepted the words of Bhishma, Drona and Vidura and sent Vidura to Drupada's capital to fetch the Pandavas. At Hastinapura, the people were happy to welcome the good Pandavas. They entered the palace and saluted the elders; Draupadi saluted Gandhari. After the reception was over, Dhritarashtra called Yudhishthira and said: "My sons are evil-minded and haughty; let there be no more quarrel; you shall have half the kingdom and rule from Khandavaprastha[1] where our capital stood during the times of Ayus, Pururavas, Nahusha and Yayati." Vidura was asked to make the preparations for Yudhishthira's coronation. Krishna congratulated Dhritarashtra on his decision. Vyasa came, performed the ceremony of installation and blessed Yudhishthira. The Pandavas with Krishna, Vyasa and others, entered Khandavaprastha which, at Indra's bidding, the divine architect Visvakarman rebuilt as the Pandava capital. When Krishna came to take leave of the Pandavas, Yudhishthira said to him: "By your grace, we have obtained this kingdom; you are our refuge whenever we are in danger; what has to be done for us, you yourself think out and do." Kunti asked her nephew to keep her sons always in mind. Krishna then left for Dvaraka with Balarama.

With his brothers, the truthful Yudhishthira ruled the kingdom in righteousness. There was a beautiful sister of Krishna, Subhadra by name, whom Arjuna married.

[1] On its site stands the Indian capital, Delhi.

To Arjuna and Subhadra was born Abhimanyu, the apple of Krishna's eye from his childhood, and in personality the very image of Krishna. Draupadi bore five sons to the five brothers: Prativindhya to Yudhishthira, Sutasoma to Bhima, Srutakarman to Arjuna, Satanika to Nakula and Srutasena to Sahadeva.

Yudhishthira's Rule

Yudhishthira pursued without any disproportion the three ends of human endeavour, virtue (*Dharma*), desire (*Kama*), and material acquisition (*Artha*) and himself looked verily like the fourth end, spiritual discipline (*Moksha*), which controlled the other three. In him people did not have a king whom they had to accept as a hereditary ruler, but one in whom they really delighted; his very sight made their eyes and hearts bloom. Those things that would please his own conscience and that he would deem beneficial if done unto himself, those Yudhishthira did; never untruthful, overbearing or disagreeable, the speech of the wise Yudhishthira was always attractive.

SABHA (THE HALL)

The Sacrifice

Maya, architect of the Demons, built one of his marvellous halls for the Pandavas. In addition he presented a mace to Bhima and the conch Devadatta to Arjuna. When the Pandavas had entered and settled themselves in the new hall of Maya, the sage Narada came, and under the pretext of enquiring into Yudhishthira's well-being, enunciated the principles of good government. Yudhishthira was so much engrossed in the grandeur of their new hall that he asked Narada whether in his numerous peregrinations, he had ever come across a hall like theirs. Narada replied that there was no hall on earth comparable to theirs and then described the

heavenly halls of the gods Indra, Yama, Varuna and Kubera. While describing Indra's hall, he added that he had seen their father Pandu there, and that Pandu strongly desired that his sons should perform a *Rajasuya* sacrifice so that he might enjoy life in heaven for a long time. After Narada's departure Yudhishthira contemplated the performance of the *Rajasuya*. That sacrifice, which conferred on him who performed it the status of a supreme sovereign, had to be preceded by successful wars against neighbouring kings and their conquest. Yudhishthira had by nature no enemy, and thanks to what they had already achieved and the righteous administration they were practising, the Pandavas commanded all-round allegiance and they had no provocations to make war on any king. In fact, even the dishonest behaviour in which thieves, cheats and court favourites indulge was absent in their realm. Yudhishthira then sent for Krishna, who drew up a list of the kings, especially such invincible ones as Jarasandha of Magadha; the other brothers, too, desired to set out on a round of conquests before performing the *Rajasuya*. Arjuna subdued the north; Bhima, the east, Sahadeva, the south and Nakula, the west. With Krishna, the four younger brothers attacked Jarasandha and Bhima slew him; the tyrant Jarasandha had imprisoned numerous kings and all of them Krishna and the Pandavas liberated. The brothers returned covered with glory and loaded with riches; Yudhishthira then expressed his gratitude to Krishna and said that it was not proper for him to perform the *Rajasuya* and take the title of Sovereign when Krishna was present, but Krishna permitted and urged him to perform the sacrifice, and for himself, asked that Yudhishthira assign him a part in the ceremony.

Invitations then went out to all kings, and Nakula personally went to Hastinapura and invited Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Dhritarashtra, Vidura and the hundred

cousins. Feasting, story telling, dances and dramas, learned discussions and the award of gifts began. Yudhishthira underwent the initiation and, surrounded by his brothers, entered the sacrificial enclosure, looking verily like Dharma incarnate. Each was assigned a duty, and for his part Krishna voluntarily chose the duty of washing the feet of the Brahmans. When the time came for offering honour to worthy persons, Bhishma considered well and pronounced Krishna as the fittest of all to receive the honour; "He indeed shines amidst all this galaxy of men, like the Sun amidst the luminaries," said Bhishma; and as Sahadeva, at Bhishma's bidding, approached Krishna to do the honour, King Sisupala of the Chedis, who took it as an insult, called Krishna a cowherd unfit to be honoured amidst royalty; Bhishma enlarged upon Krishna's greatness and told the gathering of the various previous incarnations[1] of the Lord and the exploits of the early boyhood of the Lord in the Krishna incarnation[2] and Sahadeva declared that those who did not honour the lotus-eyed Krishna were as good as dead and that he would set his foot on anyone who challenged the worship being offered to Krishna; Sisupala took up the challenge, and called on Krishna and the Pandavas to fight. A combat ensued between Krishna and Sisupala in which Krishna slew his opponent with his discus.[3] Under Krishna's protection, the sacrifice reached completion; the entire royal family complimented Yudhishthira, greeted him as Sovereign and took leave.

The Game of Dice

After the sacrifice, Duryodhana and Sakuni tarried for a few days more in the wonderful hall of the Pandavas. As he was moving about, Duryodhana mistook the crystal-clear pavement for water and pulled up

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[1] and [2] For an account of all these, see the Bhagavata below.

[3] This episode of the killing of Sisupala is the theme of one of the major Sanskrit poems, the Sisupalavadha of Magha (8th century A.D.)

his clothes, and mistaking the pond for the paved floor, fell into it. The Pandavas laughed at Duryodhana's discomfiture, fanning thereby the smouldering fire of jealousy in Duryodhana's heart. Duryodhana returned to Hastinapura, woebegone. "I am unable to tolerate the prosperity of my cousins; I burn within myself; what am I—neither a man nor a woman, nor even a human being, I who have endured the rise of my rivals? I shall mount the pyre or swallow poison," thus did Duryodhana exclaim to his uncle. Sakuni told his nephew that direct action against the Pandavas, whose power and position had grown, was unthinkable, but they could be deprived of all their possessions by trickery; he suggested that as Yudhishthira was fond of dice and was not skilful at it, he could be invited to a gambling match, at which he, Sakuni, would win all his riches for Duryodhana. To his father Duryodhana represented his condition, his dislike of food, his disquietude and his heartburn and asked of the King permission to play a match of dice with the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra agreed but called in Vidura too. Vidura did not approve of the game, as it would divide the brothers completely; Dhritarashtra replied that it was going to be only a friendly match and that if the gods were propitious, and if he himself, Bhishma, Drona and Vidura were careful, nothing untoward could happen, and asked Vidura to go and invite the Pandavas to play. Reaching Khandavaprastha, Vidura told Yudhishthira: "I know gambling is the root of all evil; I tried vainly to prevent it; but King Dhritarashtra sent me to invite you; having heard the message, decide for yourself what is best to be done; Sakuni and his associates are past masters in gambling." Yudhishthira replied: "The persons you mention are formidable gamblers, and have hands trained in deceit; but Fate sways the world and I shall not hang back when called to join."

Next day Yudhishthira started with his full retinue and with the ladies headed by Draupadi. Yudhishthira entered Hastinapura, being called not by Dhritarashtra but rather by Fate and Time! He entered the new hall where the game of dice was to be played; there Sakuni addressed him: "Sir, everything is ready; let us fix the terms of our game and begin the throw of the dice." Yudhishthira replied: "Gambling is sinful; there is no heroism in it, no principles of good polity, no honour; Sakuni, do not, like a wicked man, try to conquer us by this evil means." Sakuni defended gambling and goaded Yudhishthira to play. Saying that Fate was propelling him, Yudhishthira enquired as to the person with whom he was to play and Duryodhana replied that, on his behalf, his uncle Sakuni was to play. "All right, let us proceed, but you must understand this play by proxy is unfair," said Yudhishthira.

Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Vidura sat in the hall with aversion. The game began. Yudhishthira offered as a stake his ornaments, gems, gold, treasury, chariots and horses, servants, elephants and with his deceitful throw, Sakuni won them all. At this juncture the wise Vidura reminded Dhritarashtra that Duryodhana, who brayed like an ass when he was born, was bringing ruin on the race and that according to a well-understood principle, he should be sacrificed for the safety of all. At this Duryodhana bitterly derided Vidura as a partisan of the Pandavas. Then Yudhishthira went on staking his brothers one by one: "This young bright-eyed Nakula, I stake; this Sahadeva who expounds *dharma* and who has gained the reputation of a scholar, him I offer as a bet; this, the boat that carries us safely through the battles, this world-hero Arjuna, I stake; this Bhima whose equal in physical strength does not exist, him I offer as my stake,"—as Yudhishthira offered his brothers thus, Sakuni went on winning them over. Then Yudhish-

thira staked himself and lost.

The Dishonouring of Draupadi

Sakuni pointed out that Yudhishthira should not have staked himself and that, as he had yet Draupadi to offer, he might play again with her as the stake and gain his personal liberty. "This paragon of beauty, endowed with all qualities, this Draupadi, I offer as stake,"—when these words fell from Yudhishthira's lips, those in the gathering cried "Fie, Fie!"; the assembly was agitated; the kings were struck with grief; the bodies of Bhishma, Drona and Kripa perspired; with his head on his palm, Vidura sat as one bereft of life. But blind Dhritarashtra enquired, "Has Sakuni won, has he won?" Karna rejoiced along with Dussasana and his friends; the rest shed tears. Sakuni, completely intoxicated, threw the dice and declared, "I have won!" Duryodhana at once said: "Come, Vidura, bring Draupadi, the beloved wife of the Pandavas; let her clean our residence and be one of our servants." Vidura replied: "Fool, caught in the noose, you do not realise the danger; you do not see that you are hanging over a precipice; you are infuriating the tigers beyond the limits; the door to hell has been opened by this gambling and down will go all the Kurus now." "Fie upon Vidura," said Duryodhana, and he called Pratikamin, his messenger, and ordered him to fetch Draupadi to the hall. When the messenger returned and put Draupadi's question, namely, whether Yudhishthira first lost his own person and only then staked her, Yudhishthira sat as one lifeless and Duryodhana replied that Draupadi might come to the hall and herself put the question. He however found the messenger afraid of Bhima, and bade his brother Dussasana seize Draupadi and bring her; Dussasana caught Draupadi by the locks and dragged her to the hall. As he was dragging her away, she said softly: "Fool, I am sick and in a single garment; you cannot take me to the hall in this condition." "You

may be sick, you may have but one garment or no garment at all; you have been won in the game of dice and your place now is with the maid-servants." Thereupon Draupadi cried out: "Does none in this assembly condemn this crime? Fie, the standards of the Bharatas and of royalty have fallen! Have Bhishma, Drona, the great Vidura and the King no courage?" With these words Draupadi pitifully looked at her husbands who were writhing in anger; just then Dussasana mocked and insulted her, calling her a servant, and like a chorus, Karna and Sakuni followed Dussasana. "The point raised by you is very subtle and I am not able to answer it; one not a master of himself cannot wager what is not his, but at the same time women belong to their husbands," observed Bhishma. Draupadi objected to the very game as having been a conspiracy and carried on in a fraudulent manner. She continued: "The Kuru elders are sitting here, masters of their sons and daughter-in-law; let them examine my question, and reply; it is no assembly in which there are no elders; they are no elders who do not speak plainly what is righteous; that is not righteous where there is no truth; that is no truth in which there is the taint of deceit." As she was speaking thus, Dussasana spoke to her harsh and cruel words and dragged her along; Bhima could not tolerate the atrocity; he turned to Yudhishthira and said: "Gamblers keep prostitutes in their houses and even them they do not use as a stake; this is too much; because of you, Draupadi suffers this insult at the hands of these cruel, unbridled villains; my anger falls on you; Sahadeva, bring fire, I shall burn Yudhishthira's hands." Arjuna calmly restrained Bhima. One of the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra, young Vikarna, who was looking on at this, could not contain himself, and called upon the elders to answer Draupadi's question; when they were all silent, he said that the game itself was improper, that Draupadi

did not belong to Yudhishthira alone, that Yudhishthira had lost his liberty when he staked her and Sakuni asked that she be staked. There was a sudden uproar in the hall acclaiming Vikarna and condemning Sakuni. Karna became angry at young Vikarna's presumption when the elders were silent; he said: "If Yudhishthira staked his all, Draupadi is included in it; Draupadi was mentioned by name and the Pandavas consented to her being offered; if you think it was improper to bring a lady clad in a single garment to a public assembly, how is it proper for a single woman to marry five husbands? Dussasana! strip the Pandavas and Draupadi of their clothes." The Pandavas then threw off their upper clothes; and in the midst of the assemblage, Dussasana began to divest Draupadi of her garment. At this moment of trial, Draupadi thought of Lord Krishna, who helps those who take refuge in Him: "O, Imperishable Lord armed with the conch, discus and mace, residing at Dvaraka, Govinda of the lotus eye, protect me; I have taken refuge in you."[1] Praying to the Lord, Draupadi covered her face and wept. And lo! by the grace of the Lord Krishna, as Dussasana went on pulling off her garment, the garment multiplied endlessly; and amidst shouts of wonder, acclamation of Draupadi and condemnation of Dussasana, Dussasana was forced to sit down tired and ashamed being unable to disrobe her.[2]

The Brothers Swear Vengeance

Bhima uttered an oath before the gathering that he would tear open Dussasana's breast and drink his blood. Karna ordered Dussasana to drag the servant Draupadi into the house. When Draupadi again appealed to the elders, Duryodhana, in his arrogance, bared his left

[1] Some recite this verse at the end of their daily *Sandhya* prayers.

[2] A typical illustration of the Lord's timely help, this story of His saving the honour of Draupadi, *Draupadi-mana-samrakshana,* is a very popular theme in *Harikatha* performances.

thigh and gestured to Draupadi to come and seat herself on it;[1] Bhima, with blood-shot eyes, swore that he would smash that thigh in battle. Draupadi appealed again to Bhishma, Drona, Asvatthaman, Kripa and to King Dhritarashtra; she asked Gandhari how she could ignore her own daughter-in-law's humiliation. Vidura threatened Dhritarashtra saying that if this torment continued, ruin awaited his son and his companions; but the stupid King sat silent, and Duryodhana again showed his bare thigh to Draupadi. Thereupon Bhima, Arjuna and Sahadeva all vowed to kill Duryodhana, Dussasana, Karna and Sakuni; and Draupadi, too, declared that Bhima would crush the thigh which Duryodhana bared, Arjuna would kill Karna, and Sahadeva Sakuni.

At that time ominous portents were seen and jackals and asses howled and brayed. Gandhari and Vidura appealed to Dhritarashtra with great concern. This suddenly opened the eyes of the King, who reviled Duryodhana, and desiring the good of the family, addressed Draupadi: "Draupadi, you are foremost among my daughters-in-law; *dharma* is supreme for you; seek from me whatever boons you want." She asked for the release of her husbands. Dhritarashtra asked her to claim another boon, but she replied: "I do not want more; avarice destroys *dharma*; my husbands have been freed and they shall look to their future welfare." Dhritarashtra then spoke to Yudhishthira: "You who have no enemy, well be it with you! Go now to your kingdom with all your riches and rule there; bear in mind the words of this old man; you know the dictates of *dharma;* where there is knowledge, there peace reigns; compose yourself; the best men do not remember enmities and evil words; the good do not transgress the bounds of nobility and so you have conducted yourself in this incident; I permit-

[1] Duryodhana thereby intended to insult Draupadi as a woman of easy virtue who would betake herself to him.

ted this game so that my kinsmen might meet and so that there might be a display of each other's skill; please go to Khandavaprastha and let your mind be, as ever, in *dharma.*"

With Draupadi, the Pandavas mounted the chariot and started to their capital.

The Second Game and the Exile

Duryodhana, Dussasana, Karna and Sakuni met and deplored the fact that the old King had frustrated what they had brought about with the utmost difficulty. Duryodhana approached his father and suggested that they should challenge the Pandavas again to another game of dice, the only wager this time being that whoever lost should go into exile in the forest for twelve years, spend one year *incognito* and if found out during that one year, should again go into a twelve-year exile. The old King, wavering between righteousness and weakness for his son yielded and desired the Pandavas to be recalled, though they might have gone a long way on the road. There were indeed very few there who did not try to prevent the second game. Gandhari herself, in poignant grief, told the King: "Listen not to your undisciplined boys and plunge the race into danger; who will break the dam that has been raised over the breach? Who will fan the fire that has died down? Let us abandon this immature Duryodhana, who will learn neither from the sacred scriptures nor from his elders." Dhritarashtra could only reply that it was beyond him to prevent the game, and if the race was to come to an end thereby, that too, he could not prevent.

Duryodhana's messenger overtook Yudhishthira and delivered to him Duryodhana's challenge to a second game. Yudhishthira said he knew the evil of the game and the deceit of Sakuni, bemoaned his fate and submitted to the challenge; such was the etiquette that,

being a person of status, Yudhishthira, when once called, could ill afford to withdraw. Sakuni announced the new wager of twelve years of exile in the forest and one year spent *incognito*, cast the dice and won.

Bark and deerskin replaced the garments of the Pandavas as they started for their life of exile in the forests. Dussasana proclaimed Duryodhana's sovereignty and addressing Draupadi, asked her to give up her recluse-husbands and choose one among themselves there. At this Bhima again swore to do away with all of them in battle; Arjunà and the twins too renewed their vows to kill Karna, Sakuni and others.

Yudhishthira took leave of Bhishma and the other elders, who, unable to open their mouths, wished in their hearts the welfare of the Pandavas. Vidura said that Kunti ought not to go into exile and that she should remain in his own residence and the Pandavas also agreed to this. As the Pandavas left, the streets became jammed and people climbed up to such high places as tower-tops; the crowds wept and wanted to accompany Yudhishthira wherever he went. Draupadi went with dishevelled locks, and when she bowed to Kunti, her mother-in-law said that one possessing Draupadi's endowments hardly stood in need of advice as to how to conduct herself. The mother could not help lamenting at the separation, but the sons comforted her and went, accompanied by their wife Draupadi and their preceptor Dhaumya.

These events did not fail to upset Dhritarashtra who sent for the far-sighted Vidura, Drona and his charioteer and counsellor Sanjaya. Sanjaya regretted Dhritarashtra's belated repentance and said: "King, Time does not come, sword in hand, and sever your head from your body; the effect of Time is to confuse your head at the momentous juncture."

VANA (LIFE IN THE FORESTS)

Yudhishthira succeeded in persuading a great part of the citizens following him to return, but he was unable to shake off the numerous Brahmans devoted to austere pursuits who insisted on accompanying him into the forest; he propitiated the Sun-god and secured the miraculous Inexhaustible Vessel (*Akshaya-patra*) with which he could entertain numberless guests.

The Pandavas after walking three days and nights, reached the forest named Kamyaka. The Vrishni-Yadavas, the Panchalas and other kinsmen and friends of the Pandavas who had heard of their exile came to Kamyaka to console them; to Krishna in particular Arjuna and Draupadi unburdened their hearts, and Krishna consoled Draupadi. The Pandavas then decided that the forest called Dvaita which surrounded the lake of that name was best suited for their twelve-year banishment and proceeded thither. A large number of Brahmans and sages were already present there, engaged in religious duties and spiritual pursuits, and many of them, like Markandeya and Dalbhya, called on Yudhishthira and discoursed to him on the subject of *dharma*.

One evening when the Pandavas sat together and discussed their misfortune, Draupadi spoke indignantly, her sorrow changing to anger; she asked how Yudhishthira endured the situation, and said that the power and prosperity of kings were maintained not by quietude and forbearance but by indignation and action. Yudhishthira replied that *dharma* was the sole boat that could take them to heaven, and that he was pursuing it not in expectation of reward but because of his natural bent towards it. Bhima supported the argument of Draupadi and said that for kings, physical prowess was their duty, and that they should therefore kill their enemies without troubling themselves about completing the full term of

forest life. As Yudhishthira was endeavouring to pacify him as well, sage Vyasa arrived and, in order to remove their sorrow, imparted to them the mantra called *Pratismriti*, by practising which Arjuna was able to propitiate Indra and Siva and to secure from them the magic missiles;[1] Vyasa also advised them to return to the Kamyaka forest. At Kamyaka, Yudhishthira, who was bemoaning their fate, was consoled by the sage Brihadasva with the narration of the story of the even greater sufferings of King Nala and his Queen Damayanti.[2] They then started on pilgrimages, at the end of which they returned to the river Sarasvati and the Dvaita forest. They had by then reached the twelfth year of their forest life. There, one day, when Bhima was out with his brothers on the hunt, a huge python enfolded him; it revealed to him that it was really their ancestor, King Nahusha, doomed to become a snake, and that he could only be released from the spell when someone answered his questions. Nahusha's questions were of high import and Yudhishthira gave appropriate answers; not only was Bhima released, but Nahusha too regained his status and reached heaven.

The rains set in and then came autumn; the Pandavas moved again to Kamyaka and there listened to the sage Markandeya who spoke at length of the fruits of good and bad actions, the creation of the world, the Lord's incarnation, the greatness of Krishna and the different duties of men.

Duryodhana, Karna and Sakuni planned to visit the forests in all pomp and aggravate the anguish of Yudhishthira; under pretext of paying a visit to their

[1] This episode of Arjuna's obtaining the magic missiles from Siva, starting from the speeches of Draupadi and Bhima, is the theme of one of the five major poems in Sanskrit, the Kiratarjuniya of Bharavi (6th century A.D.). The scene of Arjuna's penance is among the wonderful sculptured panels at Mahabalipuram near Madras.

[2] Theme of the fifth of the five major poems in Sanskrit, the Naishadhiya-Charita of Sri Harsha, 12th century A.D.

cattle farms there, they reached the Dvaita forest; it was there that the followers of the Gandharva Chitrasena, who had come down there earlier, along with their ladies, for sport, took Duryodhana and his party captive. News of this reached Yudhishthira, and Bhima was pleased to hear that there was somebody on their side to teach Duryodhana a lesson; but Yudhishthira said: "Go, all of you, to the rescue of our kinsmen; whatever our mutual differences, when there is insult from outside, we are a hundred and five brothers." The Pandavas rescued Duryodhana. Yudhishthira affectionately advised Duryodhana not to embark on any such rash act and asked him to go home with an easy heart. As Duryodhana returned he was racked by the ignominy of his rescue by the hated Pandavas; he wanted to fast unto death, abandoning the kingdom to Dussasana; and Karna and Sakuni persuaded him with the utmost difficulty to return to the capital. Duryodhana then thought of a clever stratagem against the Pandavas, namely, that if the proverbially irate sage Durvasas, with all his disciples, could be sent to Yudhishthira as a guest at an untimely hour, the disappointed sage would curse Yudhishthira. With the timely arrival of Krishna and the aid of the Inexhaustible Vessel (*Akshaya-patra*) the sage was however completely gratified and the Pandavas were saved from his rage. On another occasion, when the five brothers were all out on the chase, Jayadratha of the Sindhus, the brother-in-law of Duryodhana, who happened to pass by the forest saw Draupadi, and overcome by a vile passion, forcibly carried her off on his chariot. Bhima and Arjuna pursued him and brought him back in chains, but Yudhishthira bade his brothers release him. While Yudhishthira sat brooding over this new humiliation and asked the sage Markandeya if anyone had ever suffered such a misfortune, the sage narrated at length the story of Rama and Sita, and to console them further in respect

of the sufferings of Draupadi, told of the great Savitri and her husband Satyavan.

The Pandavas then returned to the Dvaita forest again. One day, very tired, they rested under a banyan tree and were tormented by thirst; Yudhishthira sent Nakula to fetch water. When he reached a nearby pool and was about to drink, an incorporeal voice forbade him to touch the water before answering its questions; Nakula ignored the voice, drank and fell dead. When Nakula did not return after a long time, Yudhishthira sent Sahadeva; one after the other the brothers drank the water from the pool and died. Then Yudhishthira came to the pool and heard the same voice. "I am a crane and your brothers are all dead, through my power; you shall follow them if you do not answer my questions," said the spirit, a Yaksha[1] in the form of a crane. An exchange of questions and answers calling for the highest wisdom then ensued between the Yaksha and Yudhishthira, but the most noble part of the dialogue was its finale. When, pleased with his answers, the spirit asked Yudhishthira to choose one of his fallen brothers to be restored to life, Yudhishthira chose Nakula. The Yaksha asked: "Bhima is dear to you; Arjuna is your greatest support; why then do you choose a stepbrother?" Yudhishthira replied: "Yaksha! Goodness is the greatest virtue of all; and according to me greater than even the supreme spiritual purpose, namely salvation; my father had two wives, Kunti and Madri; therefore let each have one surviving son; as I make no difference between the two mothers, let Nakula return to life." The Yaksha replied that as Yudhishthira deemed kindness and consideration as greater than anything else, all his brothers would be restored to life. When the brothers sprang to life again, the spirit said: "I am your father, the god of *Dharma*; I am embodied in fame, truth, self-control,

[1] Yakshas are a class of semi-divine beings.

purity, straightforwardness, shame at wrong-doing, steadfastness, generosity and continence; the road to me is paved with non-injury, equanimity, quietude, austerity, cleanliness and tolerance. I am glad your love is impartial." Dharma then blessed him, directed that he spend the obligatory year of *incognito* in King Virata's capital and vanished.

VIRATA (LIFE IN DISGUISE AT THE VIRATA CAPITAL)

Yudhishthira pointed out that the God of *Dharma* had directed them to the city of King Virata who was full of years and endowed with righteousness and other virtues. "Let us become courtiers of this King; I shall become a Brahman recluse, named Kanka, proficient in the game of dice, in portents, in astrology, polity and the Atharvaveda; I shall also recommend myself to the King as a former companion of Yudhishthira," said Yudhishthira. Bhima said that he would become a cook named Valala, expert in manifold dainty dishes and in wrestling. Arjuna said that, in accordance with a curse of the heavenly damsel Urvasi, he would assume the character of a eunuch named Brihannala, adept in story-telling, jokes, music and dance. Nakula announced that he would become a groom in Virata's stables and take the name Damagranthin; Sahadeva chose to become a cowherd named Tantripala; Draupadi said that she would wait upon the Virata Queen Sushena as Sairandhri, an expert in hair-dressing and toilet. The preceptor Dhaumya was to go to Drupada's court.

Then they entered the Matsya country, and at the outskirts of the city of Virata, deposited their arms safely in a Sami tree; they then assumed their respective disguises and separately entered the King's service.

The Queen's brother, Kichaka, was the commander-in-chief of the Virata army; he saw Draupadi one day

almost at the end of the year of the *incognito* life of the Pandavas; he could not resist his infatuation for her, courted her and sought her through his sister. That night, Draupadi informed Bhima in the kitchen of Kichaka's advances; Bhima arranged with Draupadi to make an appointment with Kichaka later in the night at the theatre hall of the palace, and, stationing himself there, he killed him when he entered. Later, Bhima also killed the brothers of Kichaka, known as Upakichakas and who numbered a hundred and fifty. The talk of the unbelievable destruction of the powerful Kichaka and his brothers spread far and wide; at the same time, spies of Duryodhana were roving the country exerting themselves in the task of tracing and identifying the Pandavas, so that, if found out before the end of the thirteenth year, they could be sent into further exile. Drona objected to this search as unscrupulous. When the spies brought the news of Kichaka's annihilation, Duryodhana suspected that it must have been Bhima's exploit in defence of Draupadi; Duryodhana said that if they carried out a cattle-raid in Virata's territory, they could easily discover the Pandavas. He ordered the raid; with Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Asvatthaman and all his chief warriors, Duryodhana set out. News of the raid came to Virata's court and the Pandavas joined the forces of their patron. When Arjuna, in his disguise, blew his conch, Drona told Duryodhana that the false eunuch appeared to be Arjuna. Bhishma pointed out that the full period of the thirteen-year exile of the Pandavas had by then come to a close and that peace should now be established between themselves and the Pandavas. Duryodhana refused to abide by his advice and Bhishma had to wage the fight. Arjuna routed them all.

On the second day after the victory, in the morning, Yudhishthira donned royal dress and sat in a King's seat in the court; when Virata arrived, he took exception to

Yudhishthira's occupying a royal seat, but Arjuna, who was also present, revealed that it was King Yudhishthira and revealed to Virata also the identities of the cook, the dancing-master, the groom, the cowherd and the Sairandhri. Virata saluted Yudhishthira and congratulated the brothers on the safe completion of their exile. Virata then offered his daughter Uttara whom the Pandavas accepted as a daughter-in-law.

Duryodhana sent a messenger to Yudhishthira that, as Arjuna had revealed himself before the actual completion of the year, they had to return into exile; Bhishma, however, ruled that the period had been completed and that the Pandavas would not desire to win even heaven above by falsehood. The Pandavas then took up their abode at Upaplavya, on the outskirts of Virata's capital; there their kinsmen, the Yadavas and the Panchalas, came. With the Yadavas came Subhadra, Arjuna's Yadava wife, and her son Abhimanyu. They then celebrated with great joy the marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttara.

UDYOGA (THE PREPARATIONS FOR WAR)

First Council

The allies of the Pandavas assembled in the Virata court; Krishna asked the friends to apply their minds to what would be to the good of both Yudhishthira and Duryodhana. He proposed that they send a messenger to ask for half of the kingdom. His brother Balarama, inclining toward Duryodhana's side, voiced the opinion that the Kauravas should be approached in an attempt to arrange a peace and that Duryodhana must be brought round without a war. Satyaki disagreed and wanted full punishment by war to be visited on Duryodhana and his allies. Agreeing with Satyaki, King Drupada said: "Sweet words are wasted on Duryodhana; he mistakes mildness

for cowardice; he cannot be taught what is good through peaceful means; let us send word to our allies and gather our side together; at the same time, let this learned Brahman preceptor of mine go to Dhritarashtra, Bhishma and others." Krishna accepted Drupada's proposal and asked him to send first his preceptor with a message, as sound policy required that peaceful means should be tried first; Krishna added that they might return to their respective places and await news of further developments from Drupada.

Krishna's Role in the War Decided

Duryodhana learnt of Krishna's return to Dvaraka and hastened thither; simultaneously Arjuna, too, reached Dvaraka; both wanted Krishna's help. Krishna said that the two might make their respective choice between his own individual self, not fighting, and his innumerable hosts; Arjuna chose Krishna himself; Duryodhana took the army and congratulated himself. He met Balarama and Satyaki also; the former revealed that he was not going to take either side and the latter entrusted the army to Duryodhana. After Duryodhana's departure, Arjuna represented to Krishna that his long-cherished desire was that Krishna should be his charioteer; and Krishna agreed to drive Arjuna's chariot in battle. Salya, brother of Madri and uncle of Nakula and Sahadeva, was proceeding to the Pandavas and happened *en route* to enter Duryodhana's camp by mistake; Duryodhana exploited the situation and took from him a promise to help his side; Salya later repented of it before his nephews; but in the actual war, Salya was more a thorn in Duryodhana's side than a help.

Allies then poured in with their armies on both sides, the Panchalas, the Viratas, the Yadavas and the Pandyas on the Pandava side and the Sindhu-Sauviras of Jayadratha, the Kambhojas, Bhagadatta, and others on the

Kaurava side. Eleven *Akshauhinis*[1] thus gathered for Duryodhana and overflowed over a large tract beyond Hastinapura.

THE FIRST EMBASSY

Drupada's preceptor arrived at Hastinapura, saw all the forces assembled there, and told Dhritarashtra that the Pandavas preferred a peaceful settlement provided that the King gave them their due share. Dhritarashtra replied to the Brahman messenger that he would think over what was to the good of the Pandavas and to the world and send Sanjaya to the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra called Sanjaya and asked him to proceed to Upaplavya and speak to the allies assembled there in such a manner that war might be avoided.

SANJAYA'S EMBASSY

Sanjaya reached the Pandavas and said that the old King wanted peace; Yudhishthira expressed his appreciation of Dhritarashtra's views and said that he too desired peace and would not transgress the word of Krishna, who had the welfare of both the parties at heart. Krishna said that the matter had gone wrong from the very beginning and that he wished to go himself and bring about an amicable settlement. He said: "If, without betraying the interest of the Pandavas, I am able to achieve the peace of the Kauravas, my role would really be a meritorious one." When Sanjaya was ready to take his leave, Yudhishthira gave him a message to his uncle: "Father, united we live; fall not a prey to our enemies." To Duryodhana he gave the message: "We have forgiven and forgotten the dishonour done to Draupadi and the exile imposed on us; let us now have our share of the kingdom; turn your mind away from others' possessions; let there be peace and mutual good will; give us

[1] *Akshauhini*—21,870 elephants, 21,870 chariots, 65,610 horses and 109,350 foot soldiers.

at least a portion, just five villages for the five brothers; Duryodhana, we are ready for peace as well as war."

Sanjaya returned to Hastinapura in the night, tried to impress upon Dhritarashtra the grave nature of the calamity awaiting them and retired. Dhritarashtra then called Vidura and informed him with concern that Sanjaya returned, denounced him, and went away saying that he would deliver the message from the Pandavas only in the morning in the public court-hall. He added: "My body burns; I have lost sleep; tell me what you think is good for me now. You are the wise man of this race; tell me what is righteous and what is conducive to permanent weal." Vidura then spoke at length those precious lessons which became famous as Vidura's Maxims, and told many edifying stories. He exhorted Dhritarashtra at every step to be impartial towards the Pandavas and to seek a peaceful settlement with them. Dhritarashtra asked Vidura to continue his wonderful talk. Vidura then thought of the sage Sanatsujata and requested him to enlighten Dhritarashtra with that spiritual wisdom which would help him to transcend the state of subjection to the pairs, gain and loss, friend and foe and so on. The sage did so, and listening to Vidura and Sanatsujata, Dhritarashtra spent the whole night awake.

In the morning the court assembled and at Dhritarashtra's instance Sanjaya delivered the message of the Pandavas and the threats of annihilation that Arjuna uttered. Bhishma explained to Duryodhana that Krishna and Arjuna were really the divine Narayana and Nara. Sanjaya then gave account of the armies that had gathered for the Pandavas. Duryodhana, however, pointed out that while his army consisted of eleven units, that of the Pandavas had only seven, that they could vanquish the Pandavas and that he would not part with even a pin-point of the kingdom to them. He added that even if Bhishma and Drona did not join the fight on

their side, he would win with the aid of Karna. Karna then declared that he would kill the Pandavas; Bhishma again derided him and Karna threw down his arms and took a vow not to fight in the war till the death of Bhishma. Vidura explained the uncertainty of victory in war. When the assembly found Duryodhana unwilling to accept their advice, it dispersed.

THE LORD'S EMBASSY

When Duryodhana refused to part with even five villages, Yudhishthira deplored his attitude and consulted Krishna about the next step. Krishna replied that he would go to the Kauravas and see if he could yet save the world from the doom awaiting it. "I know how evil-minded Duryodhana is, but let us try for the last time so that in the eyes of the world, the blame will not fall on us; as far as my own person is concerned, do not be anxious," said Krishna. Bhima denounced Duryodhana but admitted nevertheless that peace should be preferred to the destruction of the race; Nakula, too, insisted that Krishna should explore the chances of peace. Arjuna asked Krishna to decide as he thought fit, but to Sahadeva, war alone appeared to be the fit punishment; Draupadi recapitulated the public dishonour that the sons of Dhritarashtra had inflicted on her and incited them all to war.

The Lord Krishna then left on his mission; he chose the most auspicious time to start, but the portents were such that dread war was indicated rather than the peace which all of them desired. Duryodhana learned of Krishna's journey and had sheds erected for his reception all along the way but Krishna disregarded them. Dhritarashtra also heard of Krishna's forthcoming arrival and asked Vidura to make lavish presents to him, but Vidura pointed out the hollowness of that attitude and said that the greatest honour was for them to honour his word. Duryodhana prevented any honour from being shown to

Krishna and disclosed his resolve to bind Krishna when he came and defeat the Pandavas by depriving them of their chief strength. Bhishma abhorred the idea and left the court in indignation.

Krishna arrived, met Dhritarashtra and left for Vidura's residence where his aunt, Kunti, was staying. Kunti flung her arms round Krishna's neck and wept, recounting the woes of her sons. Krishna consoled her and left for Duryodhana's abode. Duryodhana requested Krishna to share his meals but Krishna replied: "One eats at another's either in love or from necessity; you do not love me and I am not in any danger of starvation; an enemy's food ought not to be taken nor should an enemy be fed; you hate the Pandavas and the Pandavas are my very life; know that I and the Pandavas are one; I will take my food only at Vidura's hands." He then partook of the pure and dainty food of Vidura and when the two sat down that night to converse, Vidura said: "How shall I express my gratification to you? You are the inner soul of all and you know what I feel!" He added that he did not approve of Krishna's visit to the unworthy Duryodhana, hoping to prevail upon that presumptuous, self-willed, evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra, who was not wholeheartedly in favour of peace. "Where a good word and a bad meet with the same reception, there the wise should keep silent, like a musician in an assemblage of deaf men; nothing can harm you, but why should you go to their gathering at all?" asked Vidura. Krishna agreed that Vidura's view was correct but added that he wanted the world to realise that he had used the last chance to save the world from disaster.

The next morning, Krishna entered the Kaurava court; his voice rumbled like a deep drum or like a thunder-cloud as he addressed the gathering there: "I have come here to beg, to see that there may be peace

and not destruction; the requirements of righteousness, even the principles of common prudence, are being set aside by your sons, O King; if this danger to the Kauravas is ignored, a terrible disaster will engulf the whole world; and it is not as if peace were an impossible thing; give the Pandavas their paternal share and guard your sons from their inordinate avarice; the Pandavas are ready to serve you, or they are ready to fight." Who could take exception to those words? The hall stood enthralled as the Lord resumed his seat. The old King told Krishna that what he had said was most conducive to good both here and in the hereafter, but if he could convert his foolish undisciplined son, that would be his greatest achievement. Krishna then addressed Duryodhana: "The Pandavas will take you as the Crown Prince and your father as overlord; give the Pandavas their half and spurn not the welfare that awaits you."

In this manner the Lord Krishna wasted on Duryodhana for a time his sweetest and most persuasive eloquence. Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and Dhritarashtra appealed to him to accept Krishna's words. Duryodhana would not yield: "You are all partial to the Pandavas and prejudiced against me; I will not yield even a pin-point of ground to the Pandavas; we shall gladly go down fighting a warrior's battle." "You shall certainly realise the last ambition," said Krishna. Gandhari made a futile plea with her son for peace. Duryodhana ignored his mother's request, conferred with his own friends, who were a law unto themselves, and resolved on Dussasana's suggestion to bind and restrain Krishna. Duryodhana's evil design came to be known, but Krishna was unmoved and said that he would remain quiet and see who restrained whom. He then told Duryodhana: "You think I am alone and single and that you can over-power and bind me; here within myself are not only all

the Vrishnis[1] and the Pandavas, but the entire creation," and laughed aloud. As He laughed, sparks flashed from Him like lightning, and He assumed His cosmic form; everybody was blinded, but Bhishma, Drona, Vidura, Sanjaya and Dhritarashtra, whom the Lord blessed with divine vision, saw the whole creation within the Lord's transfiguration.

The Lord Krishna once more assumed his human form and made his final address to the assemblage, to Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and the others: "You have seen the proceedings of this council hall with your own eyes; the stupid Duryodhana has left the hall in anger and the King is too weak and pleads incapacity; I now take leave of you and return to Yudhishthira." Krishna called on Kunti, reported to her the failure of his peace mission and the inevitable outcome of war, and left.

As the Lord departed, he made a last effort to avoid a conflict; he took Karna up on his chariot, revealed to him his identity as the eldest son of Kunti, born of the grace of the Sun-god, and promised him that Yudhishthira would renounce the kingdom in favour of his elder brother. Karna told the Lord that he, for his part, had learnt of his nativity but having grown up as a charioteer's son and as the lifelong friend and support of Duryodhana on the one hand and as the enemy of the Pandavas on the other, it was hardly proper or possible for him, at that juncture, to do anything except to fight for Duryodhana; he added also that even if he were given Yudhishthira's kingdom, he would only give it in turn to Duryodhana! When Karna took leave of Krishna and returned to Hastinapura, he encountered Kunti on the way and bowed to her; she repeated Krishna's plea, but Karna maintained his conviction that the revelation and the approach had both come too late; and all he

[1] The tribe to which Krishna belonged; see below the Bhagavata story.

could promise his mother at that eleventh hour was that, barring Arjuna, his main rival, he would not harm any other of her sons in the coming encounter.

The War

When Krishna returned to Upaplavya, he reported to Yudhishthira the failure of his peace mission; at Hastinapura, too, the intercession of the elders had no effect on Duryodhana. The stage was now set for the great battle, and the armies on either side moved on to Kurukshetra. On his side, Duryodhana asked Bhishma to lead the forces; but Bhishma laid down as a condition for accepting the command of the army that he would not touch the five brothers and would make war only on other hosts. Duryodhana therefore had to choose between him and Karna as to who should fight first; Karna reaffirmed his resolve not to resort to arms as long as Bhishma was on the scene; at a later stage, Bhishma told Duryodhana of another resolve of his, namely that he would not fight Sikhandin on the opposite side, as he was only half-male.[1] The whole army was organised by Duryodhana and placed under the charge of the eleven leaders, Kripa, Drona, Salya, Jayadratha, the Kambhoja King Sudakshina, Kritavarman of the Yadavas, Asvatthaman, Karna, Bhurisravas, Sakuni and the Bahlika King. On their side, the Pandavas placed the command of their seven divisions under Drupada, Virata, Satyaki, Dhrishtadyumna, Dhrishtaketu, Sikhandin and Sahadeva of Magadha; Dhrishtadyumna was to be the chief commander, Arjuna, the chief general and the Lord Krishna, Arjuna's charioteer. Balarama arrived, saw the vast multitudes of people ripe to be consumed by Kala (the Time Spirit), became depressed and, disinclined to take either side or witness the destruction, departed on a pilgrimage to the holy places. On the Kaurava side, the

[1] See p. 297, footnote 2.

blind Dhritarashtra asked Sanjaya to make to him then and there a report of all the happenings on the battle-field.[1]

BHISHMA (BHISHMA'S LEADERSHIP)

The two sides massed themselves on the field of Kurukshetra, and before the battle opened, drew up the code of conduct in the war: when an engagement was finished, enmity would cease and they would resume friendship; those retreating from the fight should not be killed; combat should be fair, a chariot-fighter engaging only his opposite number; one already engaged with another, off his guard, disinclined to fight, or disarmed should not be killed. Vyasa blessed Sanjaya with power to get full information so that he could make a full report to Dhritarashtra.

At the break of dawn, the blare of conches, the beating of drums, the neighing of horses, the noise of elephants and the tumult of warriors rose on all sides. The chariots with their different standards drew up and the sight of the golden ensign of the *palmyra* tree on Bhishma's standard sent a shiver through the Pandava hearts. "How are we going to break through an army commanded by Bhishma?" asked Yudhishthira in real concern. Arjuna replied: "Victors win not so much by strength and heroism as by truth and goodness; let us eschew unrighteousness and fight without egoism; where there is right, there victory is; where Krishna is, there victory is." Arjuna then prayed to the Mother Goddess.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Strangely, the same Arjuna, who had infused this faith and courage into his elder brother, became unnerved when he arrived at the centre of the two armies and had a full view of his elders and brothers, teachers and

[1] The further account of the war in the Epic is Sanjaya's account of it to the blind old King.

kinsmen, who were his opponents; he laid down his bow and desired to desist; the Lord on his chariot then propounded the great philosophical discourse entitled the *Bhagavad Gita*,[1] calling upon Arjuna to discharge his duty disinterestedly and with a sense of dedication to the Lord; cleared of his confusion and doubt, Arjuna then decided to fight.

Then Yudhishthira and the brothers dismounted from their chariots, walked on foot, paid their obeisances to Bhishma, Drona and Kripa on the opposite side and received their blessings. Krishna saw that Karna was taking no part in the battle owing to his enmity towards Bhishma, and asked him why he should not fight on their side till Bhishma fell; Karna replied that his life was already pledged on behalf of Duryodhana. Yudhishthira then called aloud and asked whether anybody was willing to come over to their side; whereupon Yuyutsu, the son of Dhritarashtra by his non-Kshatriya wife, deserted his brothers and joined the Pandavas.

The Battle

The battle began and the Kurus and Pandavas fell upon one another as if possessed; son did not recognise father, nor father, son; nephew and uncle saw not each other, nor friend, friend; so did that terrible battle rage.

The Lord's Anger

On the forenoon of the third day Bhishma arranged a special array,[2] but with Arjuna, Bhima demoralised the enemy ranks which began retreating before his onslaught. Duryodhana ran to Bhishma, reported to him the turn of their fortunes and said that unless he and Drona put forth more strenuous efforts, he was undone. Bhishma then threw himself more vigorously into the

[1] See selections from it below, pp. 404-18.

[2] *Vyuha*, arrangement of the forces in the form of a circle (***chakra***), a lotus (***padma***), a kite (*garuda*) and so on.

conflict and, seeing the havoc wrought by him on their army, Arjuna and Krishna advanced and faced him. While Arjuna acted with restraint out of regard for their grandfather,[1] Bhishma showed his ferocity and wounded both Arjuna and Krishna. Then the Lord realised that Bhishma had been seized by the mad fury of the fight, abandoned his resolve not to take arms in the battle, dismounted from the chariot, and with his discus in hand, rushed at Bhishma, the earth trembling under his tread. Seeing the Lord rushing against him, Bhishma welcomed him: "Come, O discus-armed Lord! Strike me down; death at your hands will exalt me here and in the next world; indeed you have honoured me by attacking me." Arjuna ran after Krishna and with great effort succeeded in halting him at his tenth step; he entreated the Lord, falling at his feet: "I pray you, cease to be angry." The Lord then returned to the chariot. The forces retired for the day marvelling at the exploits of the infuriated Arjuna in the latter part of that day's battle.

During the night of the seventh day, with tearful eyes Duryodhana made a desperate and futile attempt to bring Karna and Bhishma together.

The End of Bhishma's Resistance

Bhishma continued to perform his formidable feats of arms and the Pandavas became concerned about their fate; they decided that so long as their grandfather was there, and they, the Pandavas, felt weakness towards him, victory was not possible; there was no alternative except to resort to the predestined means of removing him, namely with the help of Sikhandin, the half-male and half-female offspring of Drupada; with Sikhandin at their head the Pandavas took the field on the next morning.

[1] Really grandfather's brother.

It was then the tenth day of the battle and Bhishma was at the height of his prowess, with enemy warriors disappearing before him, like grass in fire. "I have carried out enough destruction, I am tired. I would like to be removed," said Bhishma; the Pandavas at that moment attacked and with Sikhandin in front, Arjuna rushed at Bhishma. The entire Pandava forces concentrated on Bhishma, but having vowed not to kill the Pandavas, nor fight Sikhandin, Bhishma decided that the time for his departure had come. As the shafts fell on him from Arjuna's chariot, Bhishma told Dussasana by his side: "These shafts fall on me like thunderbolts and rend my life; these shafts are Arjuna's; not Sikhandin's; they rend my body, yet I am glad, even as the mother-crab when her body is torn by the emergent brood." The shafts left not even a two-inch space anywhere on his body; with head facing eastward, the old man fell from his chariot. It was late in the evening; as he fell, his divine nature manifested itself and without touching the earth, he lay on a bed of arrows; "I shall retain my life till the auspicious winter solstice when the Sun turns north; then shall I revert to my heavenly state; my father has given me the boon of giving up life at my will," said Bhishma.

Rapt in contemplation on the Supreme, Bhishma lay in *yoga*; both sides gathered around him; he said to them: "My head droops, give it some support." Immediately several princes brought soft pillows, none of which Bhishma would accept; he then looked at Arjuna and asked him to give his head the proper support; thereupon, to his delight, Arjuna held his head up with three sharp arrows; Bhishma then asked for water; princes rushed with pots of water which Bhishma would not take; when he looked at Arjuna, the archer pierced the ground with one of his arrows and raised a jet of pure and cool water from the earth's womb; Bhishma

and ease, Karna asked Drona if there were any means at all to conquer him. "I am unable to withstand his shafts; because it would be unworthy to flee, I continue to stand fast," said Karna. Drona said that each one of them should severally assail at different places, one breaking his armour, another his bow, a third his chariot and so forth. From behind, Karna, the great archer, accomplished the feat of breaking his bow! Drona, the great teacher, managed to kill his horses and charioteer! Without pity, the six warriors then poured their shafts on the lone boy, who, deprived of his bow and chariot, yet flourished his sword, appearing to bring it down on each of those six, whose combined efforts deprived him at last of his sword and shield. Flourishing a discus, Abhimanyu then looked verily like his uncle, the Lord Krishna; he then wielded a huge mace and with it crushed Asvatthaman's chariot and horses and made him retreat. As he was dealing his deathblows on the followers of Sakuni, the son of Dussasana assailed him with his mace and in the duel that ensued, Abhimanyu fell; thus did many elders join together to kill one boy in that great battle! The death of Abhimanyu in such circumstances threw Yudhishthira into the most poignant grief, on which sage Vyasa alone could console him with stories of the death that overtook many a glorious hero of old.[1]

The Death of Jayadratha

Late in the evening, having won great victories in another encounter, Arjuna and Krishna returned and saw their tents enveloped in gloom. When they discovered the loss of Abhimanyu, Arjuna lost control of himself and began to lament. "Ah, when unaided he faced such odds,

[1] These old stories are sixteen—known as *Shodasa-raja-upakhyana*,—and from their rhetorical refrain-like repetitions, appear to have been recited by bards before bereaved persons as means of consolation.

his thoughts should have gone to me," cried the father. Guilt at having failed to assist Abhimanyu seemed to weigh on everybody and none dared even to look at Arjuna, except Krishna and the eldest brother. When Yudhishthira later told the tale of how six of the enemy had jointly encompassed his death and how Jayadratha had thwarted their plan to follow Abhimanyu into the enemy's formation, Arjuna swore that next day before sunset, he would kill Jayadratha.

On the Kaurava side, Jayadratha shuddered on hearing of Arjuna's vow, and Drona and others promised to protect him. All day, many a tense engagement took place; but the day was drawing to a close and Jayadratha could not even be seen. Then Krishna threw his discus high into the air and overshadowed the sun; in joy, along with others, Jayadratha raised his head to watch the sunset, when lo! one of the arrows of Arjuna decapitated him.

Drona's End

When the fifteenth day's battle began, the Pandavas were seized with great anxiety; Drona was as destructive as ever and Krishna told Arjuna that unless Drona laid down his arms, there was no hope for the Pandavas. They had to resort to a stratagem to put an end to him.

KARNA (KARNA'S LEADERSHIP)

Karna was then made the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces; it was the sixteenth day of the battle. After some fighting, Karna felt that he was handicapped by the lack of a charioteer like Krishna. Thereupon Duryodhana requested Salya to help him by becoming Karna's charioteer. Salya was aghast at this unexpected request; but Duryodhana persisted and Salya acquiesced with reluctance, and on condition that he should have the liberty to say anything that he pleased to Karna. Karna started on the chariot driven by Salya

and bragged that he would kill Arjuna; immediately Salya taunted him and praised his adversary. The wordy dispute of Karna and Salya continued at every step and Duryodhana had to interfere and pacify them.[1]

The Death of Dussasana

Before Karna and Arjuna met in conflict, Bhima had to settle his account with Dussasana who had humiliated Draupadi in the open hall. The two met: Bhima belaboured Dussasana with his mace, lifted him and threw him down, crushed him, tore off the arm that had dragged Draupadi by the hair, and in fulfilment of his vow, tore open his breast and drank his blood in the presence of all the kings! Bhima rounded off his savage behaviour on that day by exterminating some of the brothers of Duryodhana. The fiendish manner in which Bhima had dealt with Dussasana struck so much terror into the heart of Karna that Salya had to give him fresh courage and Asvatthaman bade Duryodhana conclude peace with the Pandavas.

Karna's End

The engagement between Karna and Arjuna then began. Arjuna opened by killing Vrishasena, Karna's son. Karna's prowess appeared to wax and he aimed the serpent missile (*Naga-astra*) at Arjuna's head; Krishna pressed the chariot five inches into the earth so that the missile merely carried away Arjuna's diadem.[2] As the two engaged in combat, the wheel of Karna's chariot became embedded in the earth. Karna then appealed to the code of chivalry and implored Arjuna to wait till he had extricated it. Krishna replied: "Ah, you appeal to *dharma*! But how is it this *dharma* did not occur to you

[1] *Salya-sarathya* or Salya's charioteership is a byword for an obstructionist associate, one who thwarts from inside.

[2] This gave birth to the Tamil saying: The danger intended for the head fortunately carried off only the turban.

when, with Duryodhana, Dussasana and Sakuni, you dragged Draupadi in a single garment to the public hall and bade her choose another husband? Where was this *dharma* when you vanquished Yudhishthira through the dice? Where was *dharma* when even at the end of their exile, you refused to part with the share due to the Pandavas? When you poisoned Bhima's food, when you tried to burn them alive in the lac-house, or when half a dozen of you combined to slay the boy Abhimanyu, where was your *dharma* gone?" He then ordered Arjuna to make quick work of Karna. Arjuna did so.

SALYA (SALYA'S LEADERSHIP)

When the three foremost champions on their side had fallen, Kripa advised Duryodhana to make peace with the Pandavas, but Duryodhana heeded not and appointed Salya as commander-in-chief. The most remarkable event of the battle on the eighteenth day was that the good-natured Yudhishthira was roused, and slew his kinsman Salya as well as Salya's brother, after Bhima had engaged the former in a mace duel. Duryodhana was defeated and caught, but he fled from the battlefield on horseback: Asvatthaman and others went in search of him.

Sakuni Killed

The remaining brothers of Duryodhana then fell prey to Bhima, and Sahadeva carried out his vow of killing the deceitful gambler Sakuni.

Duryodhana's Escape

When the eleven *Akshauhinis* of Duryodhana had for the most part been destroyed, mace in hand, Duryodhana fled the field in the direction of a lake. As he went, he recollected the words of the wise Vidura about the wholesale slaughter of Kshatriyas as the outcome of their enmity. He then immersed himself in the lake, and

with the aid of magic arts, was enabled to remain hidden below the water.

His ministers returned to Hastinapura, the capital. Yuyutsu, Duryodhana's stepbrother who had cast in his lot with the Pandavas, reached Hastinapura as the sole survivor among Dhritarashtra's sons.

Kripa, Asvatthaman and Kritavarman discovered the hiding place of Duryodhana and their meeting with him was observed by some hunters; informed by the latter, the Pandavas, in search of Duryodhana, reached the lake and discovered the secret of his concealment. "Having led so many warriors to their doom, why do you try to save your life by hiding in this cowardly fashion? Rise and fight; where has your pride gone?" said Yudhishthira, addressing Duryodhana in the water.

Duryodhana's End

Duryodhana was forced by Yudhishthira's taunts to emerge; he asked them whether it was fair for all of them to fight one; in reply, Yudhishthira reminded him of the slaying of Abhimanyu, but he added that Duryodhana would have to fight only one Pandava. The obvious choice being Bhima, there began then a mace-duel between Duryodhana and Bhima, who had vowed to slay him. Duryodhana proved a formidable adept with the mace; after a strenuous fight, Bhima smashed the thigh of Duryodhana whereon he had gestured to Draupadi to take her seat. Reminding him of all that he had done and said in the gaming hall, Bhima kicked him in the head, and danced in glee at the fulfilment of their vows. Yudhishthira pointed out to Bhima: "You have had your revenge and fulfilled your vows; touch not his head with your feet; he has been a King and a kinsman; why mock one who is now a fit object of pity?" Yudhishthira then consoled Duryodhana by saying that inexorable Fate had involved them in ruinous war, and their lot too, in

the absence of all kinsmen, would be utterly miserable.[1]

Kripa, Kritavarman and Asvatthaman lamented at the sight of Duryodhana; Asvatthaman swore that he would destroy the Pandavas that very night and at Duryodhana's instance, Kripa and Kritavarman made Asvatthaman the commander-in-chief.

SAUPTIKA (THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SLEEPING)
ASVATTHAMAN

The sun set; the nocturnal spirits began uttering weird noises as the terrible night wore on. Asvatthaman's heart seethed with anger and he swore he would attack the camp of the weary Pandavas and annihilate them while they were asleep; Kripa objected to this and advised him to rest and to open his attack in the morning. "Where is sleep for me till I avenge my father's death?" said Asvatthaman. He then rushed upon the camp of the Pandavas and slew the Panchala Prince Dhrishtadyumna, who had killed his father, Sikhandin and several other Panchala heroes, and all the five young sons of Draupadi. Sword in hand he swept across the camp like a fiend, laying waste to everything in his path. Kripa and Kritavarman, who stood at the gates, slew everyone who tried to escape and set fire to the camp at three points. In the morning, Yudhishthira voiced in grief that, even while winning, they had been vanquished, and having crossed the seas, they had been drowned in a canal, and that their lack of vigilance had really been their undoing. Draupadi lamented the loss of her sons and demanded of Bhima that he should bring the head of Asvatthaman; Bhima went in search of the teacher's son. One of the most formidable missiles in Asvatthaman's possession was the *Brahma-siras*[2] and Krishna warned Yudhishthira that

[1] On the theme of the great war, the best available Sanskrit drama is the Veni Samhara of Bhatta Narayana (8th century A.D.)

[2] Meaning Brahma's head; Arjuna also had obtained this missile from the same teacher.

Bhima would surely be vanquished if they did not hasten to save him from Asvatthaman. They mounted the chariot and went at full speed. "Now, for the annihilation of the Pandavas," muttered Asvatthaman, and released that missile which would destroy everything, but Arjuna retaliated with his own missile, another *Brahmasiras*, which he had obtained from Drona. The sages prevailed upon the two to refrain from using ghastly weapons, but while Arjuna withdrew it, Asvatthaman had not learnt how to do so; and it injured the child in the womb of Arjuna's daughter-in-law, the only seed of the future line of the Pandavas; Lord Krishna guarded the unborn with his divine power,[1] and cursed Asvatthaman for casting the terrible weapon. On his crest, Asvatthaman wore a precious jewel which constituted his glory, and that the Pandavas took to Draupadi in lieu of his head.

STRI (THE WOMEN'S LAMENT)

While Dhritarashtra grieved bitterly over the loss of all his sons, Sanjaya consoled him, and pointed out that the King could have prevented the tragedy at any stage; with his philosophy, Vidura too exhorted him to compose himself. Dhritarashtra then left for the battlefield, together with Gandhari and other women-folk of the palace; there were heart-rending laments all over the palace.

THE EVIL HEART OF OLD DHRITARASHTRA

On the field, Yudhishthira and the brothers came forward to pay their respects to their uncle. Dhritarashtra nursed the treacherous design of crushing Bhima to death, under pretext of embracing him, when the latter approached him; the anxiety with which the King sought Bhima and the villainous glow on his face be-

[1] This child was Parikshit, to whom the Bhagavata was first recited; see below, pp. 355, 357.

trayed his intention to Krishna, who placed in the arms of Dhritarashtra an iron substitute for Bhima; Dhritarashtra was always famous for his extraordinary strength; in his overmastering enmity, he crushed the image and thought that he had killed Bhima. Krishna then revealed that what the King had crushed was an iron image of Bhima, which Duryodhana himself had prepared and kept and bade the King control his grief. Sage Vyasa and Krishna consoled Gandhari; Yudhishthira prayed to her for pardon and said that he was ready to submit to any curse of hers; she lifted slightly, and for the first time, the band covering her eyes and looked at Yudhishthira's toenails; the nails immediately turned rotten. Gandhari and Draupadi consoled each other on the loss of all their issue. Gandhari drew Krishna's attention to the lamenting widows, derided him for having permitted the unnecessary fratricide and prophesied that his own kinsmen, the Yadavas, too would, in their turn, perish by fratricide; Krishna replied that it was so ordained and he had to see to that also, for in no other way could his Yadavas be removed.[1]

Then the ceremonies of cremation and obsequies for the dead heroes were performed; at Kunti's instance, the Pandavas offered water-libations to Karna's spirit also.

SANTI (QUIETUDE)

The Coronation

Yudhishthira then heard from the sage Narada and his own mother the full story of Karna's nativity and early life; this, as well as the thought of his dead kinsmen, greatly depressed him, and he developed a distaste for the kingdom which they had won after unparalleled carnage; he repented having waged war, wished his

[1] For this story, see the end of the Bhagavata, pp. 349-50, 401.

enemies had continued to follow their own ways, and he and his brothers their mendicant life; he condemned the warrior's life and desired to renounce the world. The brothers, Draupadi, Vyasa, Narada and Krishna, all disapproved of Yudhishthira's attitude, praised the dignity and scope for service in the life of a householder and King, and induced him to enter the city and crown himself. The citizens welcomed him with a chorus of praise. Krishna and others then performed the coronation of Yudhishthira. Yudhishthira made Vidura his minister, and Bhima the Crown Prince; Nakula, he placed in charge of the army, he chose Arjuna as foreign minister and Sahadeva as his personal guard.

BHISHMA'S DISCOURSES

Then Yudhishthira waited upon Krishna, lauded him and expressed their gratitude to him, but Krishna sat immersed in thought and did not reply. When Yudhishthira questioned him about his silence and preoccupation, Krishna replied: "Lying on his bed of arrows, looking like expiring fire, Bhishma thinks of me and my mind goes out to him; my mind has gone to that repository of all knowledge; approach and ask of him whatever is in your heart,—the different branches of learning, the duties of men in all stations of life, and the duties of kings; ask everything; after him, there will be a decline of knowledge; hence I urge you."

Then the five Pandavas, Krishna, Kripa and others proceeded to Kurukshetra and reached the spot near the river Oghavati where the lordly son of Ganga was lying on the bed of arrows, surrounded by many sages. The Pandavas, Krishna and others bowed to Bhishma; Krishna praised his unbounded knowledge and asked him to enlighten Yudhishthira, and with his excellent intellect, help Yudhishthira's mind to attain serenity. Bhishma doubted whether, in his present condition, and before the Lord Himself, he could say anything regarding the

Dharmas but the Lord infused his own energy into Bhishma and urged him to speak. Yudhishthira requested his grandfather first to expound the duty of kings. Bhishma saluted Dharma and Lord Krishna and began. His discourses went on and covered every imaginable subject, great and small, coming under the four ends of human endeavour, virtue, gain, desire and salvation, and conducive to the welfare of man in this and the other world. With high principles and illustrative stories, Bhishma dealt with polity and kingly duty (*Raja-dharma*), the duties of the four classes of men and stations in life, duties in abnormal times and under extreme conditions (*Apad-dharma*) and those to be observed by one intent on spiritual salvation (*Moksha-dharma*).

ANUSASANA (THE TEACHING)

Continuing his teaching, Bhishma expatiated upon the charitable bestowal of gifts (*Dana-dharma*); these discourses, being comprehensive, also included hymns to Siva and Vishnu, like the famous hymn of the Thousand Names of Vishnu (*Vishnu-sahasra-nama-stotra*).[1]

The Passing of Bhishma

With his blessings on Yudhishthira for a successful rule on earth and attainment of salvation in the other world, Bhishma concluded his discourses. The gathering was still for a moment like a picture and then sage Vyasa asked Bhishma to permit Yudhishthira to return to the city. Bhishma gave him leave, asking him to come back when the sun turned north. The day of the winter solstice came; the Pandavas returned; Bhishma decided to cast off his body and uttered a hymn to the Lord; his last words to all of them were: "Strive for truth; be good." He then cast off his mortal body and his spirit

[1] See below for its translation, pp. 421-36.

joined the Vasus in heaven.[1]

ASVAMEDHIKA[2] (THE HORSE SACRIFICE)

The passing away of Bhishma affected Yudhishthira deeply. They cremated his body and going to the river Ganga, offered water to him. Yudhishthira again rebelled at the idea of ruling the kingdom; once again Krishna, Vyasa and even Dhritarashtra consoled him and took him back to the city.

YUDHISHTHIRA'S RULE

Yudhishthira, whose pride lay in possessing the strength of righteousness, ruled in an exemplary manner; timely rains fell; people suffered not from hunger or diseases, and were not addicted to evil pursuits; right and truth were all in all to them; men or women, everyone was sweet-tongued, of straight mind, and pure; indeed sounds and touch were exceedingly pleasing, taste very sweet, form beautiful and smell pleasing.

THE SACRIFICE

Vyasa arrived at Hastinapura and induced Yudhishthira to perform the great horse sacrifice (*Asvamedha*). Krishna and the Yadavas came again to Hastinapura for the sacrifice. At that time Uttara, wife of Abhimanyu, whose child had been threatened in the womb by Asvatthaman's cruel missile, gave birth to the son whom Krishna had saved by his power; Krishna gave the name Parikshit to this son who was to continue the Pandava line. The horse sacrifice was then performed.

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[1] On this date every year, all devout Hindus offer water-libations to Bhishma the great repository of knowledge and lifelong celibate who passed away childless.

[2] Means strictly the book relating to the *Asvamedha* or Horse Sacrifice.

ASRAMAVASIKA (LIFE IN THE HERMITAGE)

THE PASSING AWAY OF THE ELDERS

For fifteen years Yudhishthira ruled, conducting himself with all due respect towards his aged uncle Dhritarashtra. Bhima alone could never reconcile himself to Dhritarashtra nor the old King to him. In the fifteenth year, the old King left for the forests to lead a retired life in the hermitage; Vidura, Sanjaya, Gandhari, and Kunti accompanied him. At Vyasa's direction, they stayed in the hermitage of Satayupa and engaged in penance.

At Hastinapura, the Pandavas lost all cheer; the absence of their mother, Dhritarashtra and Vidura aggravated the dejection which never left them after the loss of their kinsmen and friends in the great war. With Draupadi, they all repaired to the forests and paid their respects to their mother and uncle.

Yudhishthira caught sight of Vidura in severe penance and reduced to a skeleton; as he rushed to him and announced himself before him, Vidura who was also an incarnation of Dharma, entered Yudhishthira's body by the power of *Yoga*. After the return of the Pandavas to Hastinapura, Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya, Gandhari and Kunti engaged themselves in more arduous penance; one day, when the old King was returning after a bath in the Ganga, a forest fire broke out, and therein the three, Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti, cast their mortal frames and attained heaven. Sanjaya left for the Himalayas.

MAUSALA (THE YADAVA FRATRICIDE)

In the thirty-sixth year of his rule, Yudhishthira perceived evil portents, which were seen also in Dvaraka. Lord Krishna saw that the time had come for the mutual destruction of his race, the Vrishni-Yadavas, which

Gandhari had mentioned. Krishna ordered an excursion to the beach and at Prabhasa, the Vrishnis indulged in drink; a fatal quarrel arose between Satyaki and Kritavarman, which spread; impelled by Time, the Vrishnis, the Andhakas, and the Bhojas, attacked each other; all of them, with the exception of some heroes, perished. Krishna asked his charioteer Daruka to inform Arjuna of the happenings at Prabhasa; and then, seeing Balarama give up his body by *Yoga*, himself likewise departed from earth.[1]

On the receipt of the news through Daruka, Arjuna came, consoled the survivors and took all the ladies and Vajra, Krishna's grandson, along with him to Indraprastha. Every inch of the ground that Arjuna left was flooded behind him by the sea. As Arjuna was escorting the Yadava women, thieves fell upon the party, and lo! the great Arjuna who tried to save them was not able to bend his bow! His arms had lost all their strength! With such of them as were not carried away by the thieves, Arjuna returned to his city and settled the surviving Yadava heroes at different capitals.

Later Arjuna met Vyasa in his hermitage and revealed to him his astounding and shameful impotence against the bandits. He said also that the disappearance of Krishna from the world was as incredible as the drying up of the ocean or the fall of the skies: "When I think that Krishna of those great lotus-eyes is no more, I become faint; I do not want to live longer." Vyasa explained to Arjuna that the Lord's mission in that incarnation was over, and even so Arjuna's, and that his loss of strength was due to that: "Strength, intellect and power appear in their time and fall when the time changes; Time gives, and Time takes away, Time is the root of the world. The time has also come for your departure."

[1] See below towards the end of the Bhagavata, pp. 401-2.

MAHAPRASTHANA (THE GREAT DEPARTURE)

When Yudhishthira heard of the internecine war between the Yadavas, he decided to renounce the world and said to Arjuna: "Time matures all beings," and the brothers echoed: "Time, Time!" Yudhishthira gave the Kaurava kingdom to Yuyutsu and his own kingdom he conferred on Parikshit; removing their ornaments, the Pandavas donned bark garments, and left, the five Pandavas, Draupadi, and a dog as the seventh. They crossed the Himalayas and reached the Meru mountain.

They were all proceeding towards heaven by the power of *yoga*; slipping from the power of *yoga*, Draupadi dropped down on the way. "Why has the virtuous Draupadi fallen?" asked Bhima and Yudhishthira replied: "Because of her partiality to Arjuna," and passed on without noticing her. After going further on their way, the scholarly Sahadeva fell, and to Bhima's question, Yudhishthira replied that Sahadeva was boastful of his intellectual superiority, and passed on. Then Nakula fell; Yudhishthira said that Nakula was of the opinion that he had no equal in beauty, and passed on. Arjuna then fell because of his high opinion about his own heroism, and Bhima too, because of his inordinate gluttony and boasting about his physical strength. Yudhishthira quietly moved on, accompanied only by the dog.

Indra then presented himself with his chariot and asked Yudhishthira to mount so that he might be taken to heaven. "I do not want to go to heaven without my brothers," said Yudhishthira; Indra said that he would see them there. Yudhishthira then said: "This dog is devoted to me; let him go with me; mine is a compassionate nature." Indra told him that having attained immortality, Yudhishthira might leave the dog behind without any thought of unkindness; but Yudhishthira replied that he wanted no fortune which would entail the

abandonment of one devoted to him. Indra said that dogs had no place in heaven and that even the sight of them was pollution; but Yudhishthira replied that he would not, at any cost, desert the devoted creature.

The dog then revealed itself as the god Dharma who had tested Yudhishthira in the forest as the Yaksha at the pool and who had tested him again here; Dharma declared that even in heaven, there was none to equal Yudhishthira; and that with his mortal body, he would attain immortality.

The gods then led Yudhishthira to heaven but he would not stay there without his brothers and Draupadi.

SVARGAROHANA (THE ASCENT TO HEAVEN)

"Where they are, there my heaven is; this is no heaven to me," said Yudhishthira. A divine messenger took Yudhishthira through hell where his brothers were suffering; they cried out to Yudhishthira: "Pray stand before us; so long as you stand here, these tortures do not torment us." Yudhishthira then resolved to stay in hell so that the suffering of those already there might be allayed; Indra came and explained to Yudhishthira that as the latter had uttered a half-truth to Drona about his son's death, he had to be just taken through hell and shown the sufferings there. He added that his brothers and wife would also attain heaven and asked him to bathe in the Ganga of the heavenly region.

God Dharma again applauded Yudhishthira when the latter had passed the third test of kindness to others.

Yudhishthira then bathed in the heavenly Ganga, took a divine form and saw Krishna, his brothers and Draupadi. Bhishma had joined the Vasus, Drona had entered Brihaspati, Dhritarashtra had attained the world of Kubera, the god of wealth, Pandu with his Queens was in Indra's world, Karna had entered the Sun and both

Vidura and Yudhishthira became one with Dharma. And at the conclusion of his mission on earth, Krishna had become one with the eternal Lord Narayana of whom he was an incarnation.

Vaisampayana told King Janamejaya at his snake-sacrifice: "This is the sanctifying epic composed by that expounder of truth, the omniscient sage, the pure Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa; where the *Bharata* is read, there all sins subside, and there prosperity, fame and knowledge flourish in all joy."

BHARATA-SAVITRI (THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE EPIC)

"With uplifted hands, I shout; alas, none listens! Through righteousness one can gain material welfare and realise his desires as well; then why is not righteousness resorted to? Neither because of passion, fear or avarice, nor even for one's life's sake should one abandon righteousness!"

III. THE BHAGAVATA

I

Let us meditate upon that material and efficient cause which alone is responsible for the creation, existence and dissolution of this universe, for such causal character pertains to that only and not to objects like primordial matter, (The Lord) who is omniscient and self-luminous, who through his heart extended to the prime poet (Brahma) the knowledge in the form of the *Veda*, about whose nature the sages are bewildered, and in whom as the substratum there appears the illusion of the threefold creation of elements, senses, and deities, even as the transfiguration of light, water and earth into different forms,[1] that Supreme Truth which with its inherent light is ever destructive of delusion.[2]

Ah! Ye men in this world who have taste and imagination! Imbibe this delectable juice of the Bhagavata, mixed with flowing nectar, the fruit which has, through the parrot[3] (the sage Suka, the author), dropped from the tree of the *Vedas*; imbibe it till you become absorbed in the Supreme Being!

In the Naimisa forest, of the eternally vigilant ones, Saunaka and other sages eagerly asked of the minstrel Suta: "Narrate to us those auspicious stories of the

[1] Transfiguration (*Vivarta*) is a thing taking modifications or forms which are only apparently real, *e.g.*, some reflection or apparition caused by light, the bubble and wave caused by water, and pots and other objects made of mud; on the basis of immutable substance, mutable forms appear and disappear.

[2] This opening verse of the Bhagavata which embodies also the opening portion of the Vedanta Sutras, sums up the whole philosophy and metaphysics of the Vedanta.

[3] Parrot-pecked fruits, like the mango, fall of their own accord and are considered to be especially sweet.

Lord Hari, whose incarnations are for the security and prosperity of all beings." Suta[1] rejoiced at the request and began to recite:

The greatest act of virtue that man may perform is to feel towards the Lord unmotivated unhindered devotion, whereby one's self becomes tranquil; therefore, with single mind, one should always listen to the glory of the Lord, sing of Him, contemplate on Him and worship Him. Numberless are the incarnations of the Lord who is the repository of all power; the secret of the births and exploits of the Lord who, essentially, is neither associated with action nor is subject to birth, is laid up in the *Veda* and the sages have described them. This Purana known as the Bhagavata, equal to the *Vedas* and setting forth the story of the Lord of virtuous renown. the blessed sage Vyasa composed; he imparted it to his son Suka.[2] Suka imparted it to King Parikshit; and I shall recite it to you as I have heard and understood it.

When a new age, the *Dvapara Yuga*[3] was due to appear, there was born to the sage Parasara, the sage Vyasa, endowed with an aspect of the Lord Himself. Once retiring into solitude, he began to think what would be most beneficial to the world. He had learnt and practised the precepts honestly and waited upon teachers and had, above all, thrown open to the world the entire teaching of the *Vedas* through the Mahabharata; still there was regret and a sense of a gap in his heart, and as he was engrossed in this thought, the divine sage Narada arrived and told Vyasa that in all the extensive composi-

[1] Sutas, bards who went about reciting the epics and Puranas. This Suta, the reciter of the Bhagavata and other Puranas, was the son of Romaharshana meaning 'the enthralling narrator.'

[2] In praise of Suka, the Bhagavata says earlier that he had advanced so much above his father, Vyasa, in the realisation of the Self and his identification with the universe that when once the latter called him out by name, Nature in the form of trees responded.

[3] The æons or ages are four: *Krita, Treta, Dvapara* and *Kali,* showing gradual deterioration in values.

tions that he had written, he had not concentrated solely on the glory of the Lord, for, "those words which are void of the Lord's glory, however wonderful they may be, are not for the delight of pure souls; on the other hand, those great outpourings of the muse in which every word carries the stamp of the name and glory of the Lord, albeit grammatically defective in every verse, sweep away, like a current, the sins of the entire human race.[1] The description of the qualities of the Lord of chaste fame is the fruit and end of the learning and penance of man. That which is the malady of mankind cannot itself be the cure; but this malady of action, if dedicated to the Lord, produces its remedy, divesting itself of its injurious nature. So narrate the glory of the Lord to people who are constantly in woe; this would end their misery and herein would the learned be able to quench all their intellectual thirst." Vyasa then sat in contemplation in his hermitage, saw the Prime Being in his pure devoted heart and composed this Purana, which allays the ills of man and constitutes the means of his attaining devotion to the Lord. He taught it to his son Suka who was immersed in quietude and silent meditation; for even the sages in silent meditation who delight only in the Self and have transcended all books cherish devotion to the Lord, for such is the attraction of the Lord's qualities; and Suka, who revelled in the Self, revelled in that great narrative with which, later, he helped King Parikshit to attain salvation.

King Yudhishthira installed his grandson Parikshit as ruler of Hastinapura.[2] Parikshit was exceptionally virtuous. One day, while on a hunt, he was tired and

[1] *Cf.* St. Bernard, Sermon 15 on the Song of Songs: "The Name of Jesus is not only light; it is also nourishment.... I have no taste for thy writings if I cannot read this Name there .... it is honey for my mouth, melody for my ears, joy for my heart, but it is also a medicine...."

[2] The story starts from where the Mahabharata ends.

thirsty and wanted water from a sage lost in trance; mistaking him to be insensible to his suffering, the King threw a dead snake upon him and left the place in anger. The sage's son, on his return, laid a curse on the author of this insult that he would die on the seventh day from then by the bite of the serpent Takshaka. The King was stricken with remorse; he denounced himself, renounced everything and started a fast unto death on the banks of the celestial river Ganga. "Let Takshaka bite me; ye sages, sing the lays of the Lord; let me revel in the Lord and his devotees; and whatever future birth I may take, let me be endowed with friendliness towards all," so did he address the sages assembled there. That way came the young son of Sage Vyasa, sage Suka, who was wandering, indifferent to everything and devoid of all worldly attachments. Parikshit enquired of him to what a dying man should, at all costs, listen to or what he should adore and what he should not.

II

Suka replied: For those preoccupied with their domestic duties without a glimpse of their true self, there are a thousand things to be listened to; but if one aspires to attain to that where all fear is at an end, one should listen to the glories of the Lord Hari, the Soul of everything. If you fix your mind on the Lord at the last moment, it is the greatest gain of your life. Cast off all fear; with the sword of detachment sever the love of the body and those things and beings you love in its train. Contemplate on the Lord, the Self, and then, on the death of your body, you reach through the divine path of light that state wherein there is neither sorrow nor death. Whatever in this world is endowed with superior powers, has effulgence, energy, stamina, strength, endurance, beauty, sense of shame at doing wrong, prosperity, self-possession, wonderful splendour, exalted or subtle form,

—all that is that Great Truth. But what the sages consider as the more important incarnations that the unbounded Being took in sport, I shall narrate to you.

III

The Lord alone existed in the beginning, the soul of all souls, the all-pervasive one; and there was also the mystic power (*Maya*) of the Lord, the Spectator, the potency in the form of both cause and effect with which the Lord created this universe. The Universe was then one flood of water, and there the Lord lay on the *serpent couch*;[1] the One ever awake closed his eyes in mystic slumber, absorbed in His own bliss. The subtle principle within Him, as a consequence of the active quality, desired to procreate and issued from his navel. A lotus arose there and on it the Creator, Brahma, the embodiment of the *Veda*; the Creator sat in meditation, saw within himself the one Lord lying there and praised His form, the one Soul and friend of the universe, containing within Himself not only the seeds of hundreds of incarnations, but all the elements and faculties. The Creator prayed for permission and power to engage in creative activity without the attendant stain of action. The Lord, who, as Soul of all souls, is the dearest of all, blessed the Creator; and with his penance and knowledge, Brahma created the worlds.

The Boar Incarnation

The Earth was at that time under water, and Brahma pondered how best She could be extricated. The first of the demons, Hiranyaksha, was holding her down. A huge Boar which was verily the Lord in the form of the Sacrifice (*Yajna-varaha*), appeared, plunged into the waters, lifted up the Earth with his tusk, and killed the

[1] Sesha or Ananta the Serpent on which the Lord reposes is symbolic of Time.

demon Hiranyaksha who stood in his way.[1]

Sage Kapila

Brahma then created the elements, and animals and trees, the sages, the divine beings and the first progenitors, Prajapati, Kardama, Marichi, Daksha and others. Kardama married Devahuti, daughter of Manu and Satarupa, and the Lord blessed Kardama that He would Himself be born on earth as their son and give an exposition of philosophy. Devahuti was the sister of Priyavrata and Uttanapada, and of her, the Lord was born as Kapila to resuscitate the path of self-realisation. Kapila first imparted his teaching to Kardama who thereupon retired to the forest to cultivate spiritual knowledge and attain emancipation. Residing at Lake Bindusaras, Kapila, hailed by his mother as the Sun and the eye of a world plunged in the darkness of ignorance, imparted to her his message: "The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation; if it is engrossed in the material world, it binds; if it revels in the Supreme Being, it releases. When the mind is rid of the impurities of desire and avarice bred by the sense of 'I' and 'mine,' and is freed from pain and pleasure alike, then the Spirit shines forth in its own splendour, and Matter that besets Spirit does not bind any longer. The sages consider attachment as endless bondage; if that attachment is however directed to pure and good souls, it becomes the door to emancipation, for pure and good souls are forbearing, compassionate, friends of all, enemies of none, peaceful and decked with the jewel of character; with singular feeling, they adore Me and offer their acts to Me; to them, I am the dearest, the soul, the friend, the teacher and the

[1] The Lord as the Boar of Sacrifice has been represented in many sculptures. The scene of the Great Boar uplifting the earth is represented in a well-stone carving in the Udayagiri caves; as uplifter of the Earth, the *Varaha* was the patron deity of numerous dynasties of kings who took *Varaha* as a title and had the Boar-symbol as their crest.

favourite God. Devotion to Me is worthless when one does injury to other beings, is vain, intolerant and beset with an invidious outlook. I am the soul of all beings, and ignoring Me, permanently enshrined within all, mortal man is indulging in the mockery of idol worship. The arrogant one who despises Me, when abiding in another's body, who discriminates and is inimically disposed to his fellow-beings can never attain peace. However elaborate and rich the ritual of worship, I shall not be satisfied as long as one insults humanity and nature. Doing one's duty, one should worship Me in symbols only so long as one has not awakened to a sense of My presence in one's own heart and in those of others. He who draws a line between himself and another, him death pursues with its fear. In one's mind one should respect and offer obeisance to all beings, realising that the Lord has entered all as the immanent spirit." Having said this, Kapila departed. Devahuti followed her son's teachings and attained the Lord, the Self, the Absolute, the Final Beatitude.

IV

The Story of Dhruva[1]

Manu had two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanapada, both endowed with a part of the Lord, and engaged in the task of protecting the world. Uttanapada had two wives, Suniti (the Righteous) and Suruchi (the Beautiful); of the two, the latter was dearer to the King; of the former was born the son named Dhruva. Once the King was fondling Uttama, son of Suruchi, on his lap, and Dhruva too desired to share the same seat. The King did not relish this and Suruchi, who was there, told Dhruva that he did not deserve to share the King's love, since he was not born of her womb. Stung by his

[1] This story is universally popular and is sung and expounded in musical discourses (*Hari-katha* or *Kalakshepa*).

stepmother's cruel words, the boy ran weeping to his own mother, who said: "My son, blame not another for our ill-luck; adore the Lord if you desire the high place in the King's love that your stepbrother enjoys." Dhruva followed his mother's advice, controlled himself and departed from his father's city. Narada noted the boy's resolve, touched him on the head with his benign palm, and said: "There is of course a distinction between honour and insult, but when you look at it more closely you will find there is only ignorance at the root of discontent; men differ in this world by reason of their own acts; of one with superior endowments, one should be glad; with one of inferior endowments, one should be sympathetic; and with one equal to oneself, one should seek friendliness; then does one escape anguish." Dhruva replied: "Blessed Lord, You have no doubt shown the path to peace of mind for men racked by pleasure and pain; now show me the sure path to attaining a place superior to all the three worlds." Narada said: "What your mother has said is the path to everlasting peace; go to the banks of the Yamuna, and there in the *Madhuvana* where the Lord is ever present, meditate upon Him, and here is the supreme secret *mantra*[1] to be repeated by you: "*Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.*" (*Om*, obeisance to Lord Vasudeva.) Following the sage's instructions, Dhruva went to the *Madhuvana* on the Yamuna, bathed, fasted, held his breath and stood on one foot steady as a post, concentrating on the Supreme Being. The Lord flashed before his heart like lightning and disappeared; Dhruva fell, appearing to kiss and clasp the vision; the Lord touched him with his conch of knowledge[2] and at once Dhruva burst into a song of praise to the Lord:[3]

[1] *Mantra*, Vedic or Puranic, is a sacred formula whose repetition is efficacious enough to bestow a spiritual or other benefit.

[2] In one hand, the Lord carries a conch; it symbolises knowledge and power of speech.

[3] There is a belief that the recital of this hymn of Dhruva bestows

"He who, entering into me, revives with His power, my dormant speech, as indeed every other faculty of mine, —to You, O Lord, endowed with all powers, I make obeisance. It is by the intelligence that You have vouchsafed that this moribund world awoke to life; how can one, if grateful, forget Your feet, the sole refuge for one's salvation? I seek that Brahman, the Source of the Universe, the One, the Infinite, the Primary, the Changeless, the One that is Bliss itself, from whom arrested in their effort to reach Him, learning and other powers retire one after another." The Lord congratulated the boy and conferred upon him a state which none before had ever attained, that shining abode of the Pole Star,[1] the stable hub on which revolves the wheel of the luminaries, the planets and stars.

The Story of Prithu

In Dhruva's line, there appeared the violent Vena. Oppressed by Vena's severity, his father Anga retired to the forests; there was no alternative for the sages, who could not endure Vena's cruelty unless they struck him down with a curse; for they felt the evils of tyranny were worse than those of anarchy. Out of Vena's arms, the sages then brought forth the virtuous Prithu (the Great), a partial incarnation of the Lord Himself. His wife Archis (Ray of Light), was none else but the Goddess of Prosperity. Prithu prevented the bards from singing his praises, and asked them to sing of the Lord of whom alone can praise never be false or exaggerated. He safeguarded the bounds of righteousness and punished those that transgressed them; compassionate towards the suffering, revering women as mothers, loving subjects like a father, he made earth yield every kind of food, nourishment and treasure. He also made earth even and com-

on the young knowledge and successful pursuit of learning.

[1] Dhruva is the Pole Star.

fortable for habitation and was the first to found villages, towns and cities. In this manner, Earth became almost his daughter, taking the name *Prithvi* after him.

The Story of Prachinabarhis

In Prithu's line appeared the progenitor named Prachinabarhis, so called because he was constantly engaged in the performance of sacrifices. Once Narada, desiring to cure him of his sacrificial obsession, came to him and opened his eyes to the endless slaughter that he was committing. Narada said: "To seek remedy for act by act is only the shifting of a load from one shoulder to another; from within one dream, you are indulging in another; you do not see that the alternative to this senseless slaughter is to please the Lord with devotion." Narada left him after explaining the nature of the individual and universal selves, and Prachinabarhis, laying the burden of the kingdom on his sons, retired to the hermitage of Kapila where concentrating on the Lord with one-pointed mind, he attained union with the Lord.

V

The Story of Priyavrata

Priyavrata, brother of Uttanapada and uncle of Dhruva, was greatly devoted to the Lord, and having learnt of the truth from Narada, he was eager to embark on the pursuit of the Brahman, caring nothing for the kingdom which his father had called upon him to rule. Thereupon the God Brahma came and told him: "To him who is not vigilant there may be danger even in the forests, because he is followed there also by his six enemies (the senses); and if one has conquered the senses and is a man of knowledge delighting in the Self, what harm can household life do him?" Thus at the instance of Lord Brahma, Priyavrata resumed worldly duties and keeping himself pure by reason of his constant

contemplation on the Lord, he ruled the earth. Like a second Sun, he revolved round the world seven times; the seven seas and the seven continents were all laid down by him, as also the surveys of the mountains, rivers and forests and the boundaries of each continent.

Rishabha

In Priyavrata's line the Lord became incarnate as the son of Nabhi with a view to expounding the *dharmas*. As the son was superior in every respect, body, strength, lustre and beauty, the father called him Rishabha (the foremost of the class). Lord Rishabha took his country as the field for the performance of his ordained duties, exemplified by his observance the householder's duties, married Jayanti, and begot a hundred sons equal to himself, the eldest of whom, also foremost by noble qualities, was Bharata, after whom they call this country *Bharatavarsha*.[1] When the world was under Rishabha's care, none coveted anything belonging to another. Once he imparted to his sons the following precepts in an assemblage of men of knowledge and in the presence of his subjects:

"The body that man has taken in the world hardly deserves the miserable pleasures which are fit only for animals feeding on garbage; it deserves that divine penance, my sons, whereby mind will be purified and the everlasting bliss of the Brahman will also be gained. The world indeed is blind to its own welfare; with excessive desire and craving for material goods, it develops mutual animosity for the sake of a particle of pleasure, and knows not the endless misery to which it submits itself in its folly." After installing Bharata as King, Rishabha retired as a recluse.

The Story of (Jada) Bharata

Bharata married Panchajani, daughter of Visvarupa,

[1] Sometimes Bharata, the son of Dushyanta and Sakuntala, is said to have given this name to India.

and begot five sons. After a long righteous reign, he entrusted the kingdom to his sons, and retired to a hermitage to practise devotion to the Lord in tranquillity. Bharata, who had renounced everything, developed an intense love for a fawn which he had once rescued from a river and thereby fell from the high divine state he had attained; and as he died thinking only of the fawn, he was born as a deer in his next birth; through penance he renounced his animal body and was born as a Brahman boy; he then practised devotion to the Lord and detachment, and was going about like a madman, stupid, blind, deaf and mute, thereby earning the name Jada Bharata. Once some savage prince, addicted to human sacrifice, was about to sacrifice him to a goddess; Bharata himself was unperturbed, but the goddess saved him.

Rahugana, King of the Sindhu-Sauviras, was once going on a journey and the palanquin-bearers, who were short of one, indented the services of the stout young Bharata who was at hand. As there was a jolt on Bharata's side of the palanquin, Rahugana made a slighting reference to Bharata's youth and corpulence; Bharata coolly pointed out that corpulence and leanness belonged to the flesh and not to the spirit, and the relation of master and servant was only nominal. Rahugana at once woke up to the real identity of the great soul bearing his palanquin, alighted, fell at Bharata's feet, begged his pardon and asked for enlightenment. Bharata treated the King to an exposition of the philosophy of the Self and devotion to the Lord; he called upon the King to slay with the sword of service to the Lord and to one's teacher the enemy called mind which deprives a man of his soul. "Abandon the role of punishing others, cultivate friendliness to all beings, and with a detached mind, and armed with the sword of knowledge sharpened by the Lord's service, cross over to the other shore." Bharata then went about the world again in the same manner, full like

an ocean, with the waves of his faculties all stilled.[1]

VI

The Story of Ajamila[2]

Though conscious of the harm to oneself, a man continues to commit sin; what is the true expiation of sin? Expiation for an act of sin by a similar act is not final; knowledge is the only real expiation. Those who eat only wholesome food do not fall a prey to disease; even so, those of disciplined lives qualify themselves for welfare; similarly exclusive devotion to the Lord also banished sin, even as the Sun banishes fog; expiatory rites, without devotion to the Lord, are unavailing.[3]

In Kanyakubja, lived a fallen Brahman, Ajamila by name; in later life, he had ten sons, the youngest of whom was named Narayana. Old Ajamila doted on the youngest child, and as his last minutes drew near, his thoughts were completely on his favourite Narayana. The emissaries of the God of Death (Yama) had already come with their nooses; Ajamila called upon Narayana. When the Name of the Blessed Lord had been uttered, the divine attendants of the Lord also appeared and saved him. The utterance of the Lord's Name is the most potent expiation of sin, whereby the Lord's memory is roused and sustained. Even if the Lord's Name is uttered in association with another, even though the utterance is in derision, devoid of meaning or in mockery, whether

[1] The rest of the fifth book is devoted to a description of cosmography which forms part of the subject-matter of the Puranas.

[2] This story is a basic text for religious sermons on the efficacy of the Lord's Name as the saviour.

[3] If rites should be done for expiation, further mistakes in the rites would call for further expiatory rites and there will thus be an endless regress; so, at the end of all the acts, the following is recited: "Of all these expiations in the form of penances or rites, the final expiation is the continuous thought of the Lord." And the Name of the Lord is then repeated several times.

it is with or without knowledge, it destroys all sins; a powerful drug cures, even if it is taken accidentally; and a *mantra* too does good even if a man does not understand its full efficacy.[1]

VII

THE STORY OF PRAHLADA AND THE INCARNATION OF THE LORD AS NRISIMHA (MAN-LION)[2]

"The Lord is the common friend of all beings; how could He be partial to the gods and ill-disposed to the demons?" asked King Parikshit. Suka replied that the demons had sought the path of opposition to the Lord only for speedier salvation; they hated the Lord and courted death at His hands to be eventually saved by Him. The demons were once divine beings who for some wrong or other were doomed to be born as demons; thus, it is the two doorkeepers of the Lord Vishnu in His Heaven, Jaya and Vijaya, who were born repeatedly as the demon brothers, Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu, Sisupala and Dantavaktra, and Ravana and Kumbhakarna. After a series of these expiatory births, in which again and again the Lord dealt with them, they assumed their original divine status.

Ever since his brother Hiranyaksha was slain by the Lord in the Boar-incarnation, his brother, Hiranyakasipu, bore a grudge against Him. He thought the best way to harm the Lord was to oppress His devotees, and to suppress acts of merit dedicated to Him. On his order his emissaries sallied forth to destroy cows, Brahmans,

[1] These are texts on which doctrines of the school of *Nama-Siddhanta* or salvation through the utterance of the Lord's Name are based.

The rest of the sixth book is taken up by the story of the great feud between Indra and Vritra.

[2] One of the most important and most popular stories, it forms again and again the theme of religious lecture, musical discourse or popular play.

sacrifices and due observance of scripture-ordained duties. Desiring to make himself the Lord of the world, ageless, immortal and without a rival, Hiranyakasipu began penances in propitiation of Brahma. Brahma was pleased to grant him favours; and the favours he asked for were that no creature created by Brahma could kill him; that neither inside nor outside, neither during day nor night, nor by any weapon, should death come to him; that death should not occur to him on the ground or in the air, either from men or animals, from the animate or the inanimate, from gods, demons or serpents; and that he should have no rival in battle; that he should enjoy sovereignty over all beings and that he should have the greatness of all the gods. Difficult though their bestowal was, Brahma said, "Yes," and went away. Unable to bear his cruelty, the whole world and its guardian-gods took refuge in the Lord Vishnu. The Lord promised to annihilate him when his sins became overwhelming and asked them to wait for a while.

There were four sons of Hiranyakasipu, and the best of them was Prahlada, the servant of great souls, truthful and as kindly towards all beings as if he were their very soul. He was by nature devoted to the Lord Vasudeva, and for the same reason, Hiranyakasipu hated this noble son of his.

Once the demon King took his little son on his lap and asked him what he had learnt best in his class. Prahlada said: "This I consider best for men who live in constant dread, owing to their mistaken notions: one should, abandoning the house which is the cause of his fall, retire to the forest and adore Lord Hari." Hiranyakasipu thought that Vishnu's secret emissaries were poisoning his son's mind and bade the teachers be vigilant. A second time the father came and asked his son what he had learnt best. Prahlada said: "Listening to Vishnu's glory, singing of it, thinking of Him, service at

His feet, dedicating oneself to Him, becoming His servant and friend, His worship, obeisance to Him—if one could have this ninefold devotion to the Lord, I think that is the best lesson one has learnt." Hiranyakasipu flung his son from his knee. With burning eyes, he ordered Prahlada to be forthwith put to death by poison or any other means. Elephants, serpents, black rites, poisoning, starvation, wind, fire, water, throwing down from precipices—nothing could kill Prahlada, who had fixed his mind on the Lord. Then did Hiranyakasipu begin to reflect that perhaps here was someone of inscrutable origin and greatness, destined to be his own death. He however bade the tutors to apply themselves more assiduously to the task of reforming Prahlada. When they expatiated upon the duties of household life, Prahlada pointed out how all that was caught up in the limitations of opposites, pleasure-pain, good-bad, and so forth. Once in the interval when the teachers were engaged in their work, Prahlada assembled his fellow-pupils and spoke to them: "Come, waste not your time in senseless play. Even as boys you should cultivate devotion to God; hard is it to gain this birth, this great opportunity to adore the Lord, and time is short; just as unwanted misery comes without seeking it, so will pleasure also come to you in the nature of things; none need spend time in exerting himself for it; half of your life you spend in sleep; part is wasted in youthful carelessness and another in the helplessness of old age; and if the remaining balance is spent in wallowing in the trivial pleasures of domestic or sensuous life, where is any hope of salvation? Avarice is apparently dearer than life, otherwise why should a thief, a servant or a merchant risk his life for it? Lust and taste are an endless temptation; detachment therefrom is therefore indispensable. After rising superior to these domestic and personal distractions, one must be on guard against the danger of making distinctions between man and

man; you are sons of demons, but I warn you, the real demons are sense-attachments; avoid them and take refuge in the Lord Narayana; He is the salvation which dispassionate souls aspire to. My boys, pleasing the Lord is not a difficult task, for He is the soul of all and is everywhere around; therefore, abandon your devilish attitude and cultivate compassion and friendliness towards all beings; thereby the Lord is pleased."

The students went over to Prahlada, and the perplexed masters reported the crisis to Hiranyakasipu. The infuriated father decided to kill this traitor to the demon-family. "Relying on whose strength did you transgress my command?" thundered Hiranyakasipu to Prahlada. The son calmly replied: "Relying on the strength of Him who is not only my strength but yours too, nay of everyone that has any strength. Give up this devilish attitude; keep your mind calm and serene; your only real enemy is your own rebellious mind; this is the true devotion to the boundless Lord." Hiranyakasipu exclaimed: "If He is everywhere, why is He not visible in this pillar? If He is not here, He under whom you take shelter, I will cut off your head."

Threatening his son thus, the demon King drew his sword, leaped down from his throne and struck the pillar violently; at that very moment, there was a terrifying explosion as if the very vault of heaven was splitting; to substantiate His devotee's words and to demonstrate His immanence, the Lord emerged from the pillar in the court-hall, presenting an amazing form, neither wholly animal nor wholly human. The demon fell on the Lord with his mace, but the Lord lightly seized him and remembering the favours that he had secured from Brahma, dragged him to the threshold of a door, threw him across his knees, and with His sharp nails tore him open. When this first of demons, the terror of the three worlds, had been slain by the Lord, the heavens rejoiced and there

fell a shower of celestial flowers. The gods lauded Lord Hari, and Prahlada himself broke into a glorious hymn of praise: "Methinks wealth, high birth, penance, learning, strength and intellect are of no avail for the propitiation of the Lord who is satisfied only by devotion; the lowest among his devotees is superior to the highest who relies on learning and other attainments. What is man to honour the Lord with his offerings? The Lord is complete in Himself and master of Himself and does not meekly look to any honour from ignorant man; whatever honour man pays to the Lord is honour done to his own self." "O Lord, withhold Your anger now that the demon is killed; pious souls rejoice; the worlds are at rest; may people remember your terrible Man-lion form and be rid of all their fears. I am not afraid of Your terrible form, these teeth and claws; I am only afraid of the torture awaiting one cast as a victim on the wheel of this transmigratory existence; the remedy that man seeks here is itself another malady, and he is wandering without realising that service at Your feet is the only cure. Parents are no refuge for the boy, nor medicine for the invalid, nor a boat for one sinking in mid-ocean; the remedy naïvely sought here for those in distress becomes fruitless if You, O Lord! have neglected them. Man has been cast upon the sixteen-spoked wheel[1] and is being crushed; pray extricate him. Friend and soul of all, You have no consideration of high and low; in the measure of their own service to You, men receive your blessings; fruits are in proportion to service and there is no distinction of higher or lower. Each sense, like a wife, pulls him to its side, and, as if this were not enough, men develop mutual animosities also; take pity on foolish man and take him safely to

[1] Refers to the wheel of life or worlds composed of the sixteen evolutes of matter according to the Samkhya philosophy, *viz.*, the five senses of cognition, the five organs of action, the mind, and the five gross elements, earth, etc.

the shore. I am not afraid of this life, this river of Hades, for I have the nectar of Your thought to uphold me; I am sorry for the fools who have turned away from You and have loaded themselves with burden for the sake of an illusory sense-pleasure. Sages practising silent meditation in lonely forests are indifferent to others; but apart from these brethren of mine, I am indifferent to my own individual salvation; and for this bewildered humanity I see no refuge save You. Silence, vows, learning, penance, teaching, all these that are surely means to salvation become merely a means of livelihood and not even that to the vain impostors who have not subdued their senses. Therefore, O worthiest Lord, without obeisance to You, praise, service, worship and thought, how can man gain that devotion to You which leads him to deliverance here?"

When the Lord was lauded thus by Prahlada, the Lord's anger was abated and He bade Prahlada ask for a blessing. Prahlada said that the devotee who asks favours of the Lord is only a mercenary. He added, "If you would grant me my desire, pray see that no desire grows in my heart. And another boon too: If you are pleased with me, let my father be purified of his sins."[1] "So be it," said the Lord, and added, "You shall be the ideal of my devotees."[2]

VIII

"I seek the Almighty, who endeavours wisely without egoism, without any expectation, being Himself full, without being urged by another, He who teaches man by Himself not swerving from His path and thus fosters all righteousness."

[1] In the Vishnu Purana account of this story, the main emphasis is on this noble idea of the reformation of Hiranyakasipu.

[2] The rest of the seventh book sets forth the duties of the different classes of men and stations of life.

The Story of the Emancipation of the Elephant-King (Gajendramoksha)[1]

At Mount Trikuta, the Lord of Elephants (Gajendra) one day wandered about with his herd and feeling thirsty, reached a lake and plunged into it, bathing, drinking and refreshing his weary body. As Fate would have it, a mighty crocodile caught him and neither the strength of the elephant nor the combined efforts of the herd could drag him out of the lake and from the crocodile's hold. When none could help, the elephant-chief pondered over his plight, and thought of the Lord as the only saviour; the impression of his previous birth awoke, and he remembered and recited the Lord's *mantra* which he had learnt; he cried out, "Obeisance to the Lord, the primary seed; may the original root of all (*adi-mula*)[2] protect me." Armed with His discus, the Lord reached the scene of Gajendra's plight and extricated him from the lake and the crocodile, wounding the latter with His discus. The elephant and the crocodile together then resumed the original forms from which they had fallen as a result of their acts of transgression against the sages.

The Tortoise Incarnation (Kurmavatara) and the Story of the Churning of the Ocean[3]

A conflict arose between the gods and demons, and when the demons gave great trouble, the gods, led by Brahma, prayed to the Lord. The Lord appeared and

[1] Another of the popular Puranic stories, it is the text for the doctrine that for salvation through the grace of the Lord, birth is no criterion.

[2] The characterisation of the Lord as the ultimate source, *Adi-mula,* became one of the Lord's saving Names after this story; it becomes also one of the many names of the Lord which the Hindus take as personal proper names.

[3] The conflict of the gods and demons and the churning of the ocean for the nectar have a permanent hold on Indian imagination; it is the supreme symbol of the eternal conflict of good and evil, and the eventual acquisition of precious rewards.

said: "Let the gods call off the conflict and come to terms with the demons; success is achieved not by agitation so much as by persuasion; let the ocean of milk be churned, and the nectar secured from it will make you, O gods, immortal; the first emanation will be poison, and then a number of precious objects will arise; you must be neither afraid of the poison, nor covetous of the precious things; above all, let enmity cease between you. Mount Mandara will be the churning rod, the serpent Vasuki the rope and Myself your help." The gods acted accordingly; the huge mountain was taken and thrown into the ocean, and as the gods and demons made it revolve with the serpent as a rope, the heavy mountain, lacking support below, sank; the Lord saw the plight of the churners, took the form of a huge wonder-tortoise, dived in and supported the revolving mountain on his back. When the ocean was thus churned, there arose the terrible poison called *Halahala*; the virulent poison spread about, and they all took refuge under the ever-auspicious Lord Siva. Siva, the friend of all beings, was moved and He told Parvati, "Behold, my dear, the living world is threatened with extinction; what is a lord worth if he saves not the distressed? I shall therefore swallow this poison, and let there be safety to men." Siva then took the poison into His palm and swallowed it in His overflowing compassion; the poison could not harm Him but left a blue stain on his throat;[1] and the stain caused by benevolent service is indeed an ornament to the good souls.

The churning then progressed safely; first emerged from the ocean of milk the milch-cow *Kamadhenu*, the fulfiller of all wishes, then the pure white horse and elephant, *Ucchaisravas* and *Airavata*, the wish-yielding tree *Parijata* and those beautiful damsels, the *Apsarasas*. The sages, gods and Lord Hari took them. Then arose like a

[1] Siva is thus called Nilakantha.

flash of lightning, the Goddess Sri, the deity of beauty and prosperity. Everybody courted Her, but the Goddess Herself looked at them all disdainfully: "One may do penance but not have conquered anger; one may have knowledge without detachment; indeed a man may be great, but at the same be a prey to desire; another may be virtuous in conduct but unfriendly towards his fellow beings; and ready to part with possessions but not informed by higher spiritual purpose." She was in search of one in whom goodness and virtue were unmixed and invariable; such a one was indeed the Lord Vishnu, and she chose Him as her Lord. The next product to emerge from the waters was wine, and the demons took it for themselves.

It was then that a wonderful being, a partial incarnation of the Lord Himself, arose from the milky waves; he was Dhanvantari, the founder of medical lore, the science of life (*Ayurveda*), and in his hand was a jar filled with nectar. Immediately the demons snatched the jar of nectar and the gods reported it to Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu assumed a miraculous and indescribable female form (*Mohini*); with all her graces and blandishments, this damsel bewitched the demons, who invited her to be the arbiter and to divide the nectar equally among them all. She took the nectar jar, and moved between the two rows, duping the demons and feeding the gods with the elixir that banished old age and death. The demons too strove for the nectar, but there was this difference at the time of the enjoyment of the prize, that the gods worshipped the Lord and the demons did not.

THE DWARF AND COLOSSUS INCARNATIONS (VAMANA AND TRIVIKRAMA AVATARAS)

The failure to obtain the nectar and its advantage infuriated the demons and there followed the greatest of conflicts which the gods and demons waged, remembered

as the *Daivasura Yuddha*. The demons were led by Bali, son of Virochana. Indra slew several of the chief demons, including Paka, Namuchi and Jambha. The defeated Bali sought the aid of the priests named Bhrigus who performed for them the *Visvajit* sacrifice which would secure for one, victory over all. Bali invaded Indra's capital and Indra's preceptor urged that for the time being, as the enemy was strong and they could do nothing, they should evacuate Amaravati and bide their time. The gods accordingly went into hiding and Bali occupied the heavens as King. Aditi, the mother of the gods, unable to contain her grief at the defeat of her sons, appealed to the sage Kasyapa, her lord, to find a way to restore the gods to power. The Lord was born as the dwarf-like son (*Vamana*) of Kasyapa and Aditi, and entered the sacrificial hall of Bali. Bali was flattered at the arrival of such a distinguished visitor at his sacrifice, and asked him what gift he desired. The Lord in disguise said: "I require only a little space; give me just as much ground as is measured by three steps of mine; to receive the gift of what is barely necessary is no sin." "You Brahman boy, you do not understand your own needs and my capacities; I can give you a continent." "Indeed," said Vamana, "but one not satisfied with three steps cannot be satisfied even with a continent; with material gains and desires, there is no satisfaction; such is avarice; but one contented with what happens to him of itself is happy; a Brahman's lustre brightens by contentment; by its absence it is quenched like fire by water. Wealth is only that which is useful. Therefore pray give me just these three feet of ground." Bali agreed, but his preceptor, Sukra, who recognised that Vishnu Himself had come for Bali's undoing, intervened. Bali told his preceptor, "I have promised this gift and my word must be kept; I may lose my position and power; but I, a descendant of Prahlada,

cannot break my word." Bali gave what Vamana asked; the moment the gift was made, lo! the dwarfish form expanded, plunging everybody in amazement. Within the cosmic form that the Lord had assumed, Bali saw the whole universe. With one step, the Lord spanned the entire earth, with another the whole of heaven, and asked Bali to point out space for the third. "Lord," replied Bali, "my words will never be broken; here, place Your third foot on my head. Punishment from the most worthy is itself a praiseworthy gain; You are the indirect teacher of the demons, and this fall that You have brought upon us who had been blinded by manifold infatuation is our awakening." The Lord said: "When I want to bless a man, I deprive him of his possessions, for by misusing one's wealth, one insults the world and Myself."

THE FISH INCARNATION (MATSYAVATARA)

There was an intermediate deluge;[1] Brahma slept for a while; the demon Hayagriva stole the Vedas. Lord Vishnu noticed this and took the form of a Fish. In the Dravida country, there was a pious King, Satyavrata by name; as he was making an offering of water in the Kritamala river, the Lord appeared as a tiny Fish in the water of his palm. The Fish began to grow, and wondering at this, the King went on transferring it from one vessel or container to another. The Fish, which had finally to be deposited in the sea, told him: "On the seventh day from now, all the worlds will become completely flooded; on the flood waters, a boat will come to you;[2] embark in it with manifold herbs and seeds and surrounded by the seven great sages and every class of living beings; a strong gale will rock the boat, but tie it to my snout with the great serpent, and as you ask me

[1] Deluges are of two kinds; main ones (*Mahapralaya*) and the secondary or intermediate ones (*Avantarapralaya*).

[2] *Cf.* Noah's ark. Other peoples of antiquity have also such flood legends.

questions, I shall expound to you then the glory of Myself, the Supreme Brahman." Accordingly the sea swelled as huge rain-clouds poured down incessantly, rolled on and engulfed the world; the boat appeared, and also the great Fish; to its single snout, Satyavrata tied the ark. Dragging the ark over the waters, the Lord as a Fish imparted to Satyavrata the teachings about Truth which were collected in the Purana known as the *Matsya* (Fish). After the waters of the deluge had subsided, the Lord slew the demon Hayagriva and restored the Vedas to Brahma, who had awoke from his slumber.

IX

The Rama Incarnation

The story of the Lord in His incarnation as Rama and his three brothers and of the slaying of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons has been frequently told.[1] Upholding the vow of monogamy, pure and the model of a royal sage, Rama taught by his example the duties of the ideal householder. Planting in the hearts of those who remember him, his tender foot pricked by the thorns of the Dandaka forest, Rama returned to His own Light. He who listens to Rama's story will be endowed with compassion and attain liberation.

The Parasurama Incarnation

The sage Jamadagni married Renuka; the last of their sons was Rama, an incarnation of the Lord, who not only destroyed the royal house of the Haihayas, but swept the earth clean of warrior races twenty-one times. The royal dynasties had become wicked and the Lord was forced to destroy them. In the end,[2] he abandoned the role of the avenger and with a peaceful mind, retired to the Mahendra hills.

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[1] A full account of the story of Rama is given elsewhere in this anthology. (See p. 150 ff.)

[2] See the fuller story at the end of the first book of the Ramayana.

THE STORY OF RANTIDEVA

In the line of Bharata, son of Dushyanta and Sakuntala, appeared Rantideva. The fame of Rantideva is sung in this and the other world, Rantideva, who, though himself hungry, was in the habit of giving away his wealth as it came, to secure which he strove as little as one would for the air which one breathed. For Rantideva, who had reduced himself to poverty by his generosity and was starving with his family, forty-eight days passed without his taking even water. A little liquid, and that enough for only one, was all that remained, and as he was about to drink it, an outcast (*Chandala*) came begging for water. Rantideva was moved at the sight and said, "I do not desire from God the great state attended by divine powers or even deliverance from rebirth. Establishing myself in the hearts of all beings, I take on myself their suffering so that they may be rid of their misery." So saying, that King who was compassionate by nature gave that little liquid to the *Chandala*, though he was himself dying of thirst. The Lord of the three worlds came and desired to bestow on him manifold blessings, but Rantideva, who had no attachment or desire, merely bowed to Lord Vâsudeva in devotion.

X (A)

THE KRISHNA INCARNATION

Earth was again beset by demons in the form of arrogant kings. Earth went to Brahma and wept. Brahma said: "In the house of Vasudeva, the Supreme Being Vâsudeva will be born; let the celestial damsels be born as cowherd women; let the sages be born as cows; let the serpent Sesha, who is a partial incarnation of the Lord, be born as his elder brother. The Mystic Power of the Lord (*Yoga-Maya*) will also be born to further the Lord's plan."

Surasena of the race of the Yadus was living at

Mathura and one day Vasudeva, son of Sura, was driving in procession in his chariot with his newly married bride Devaki, daughter of King Ugrasena. Kamsa, brother of Devaki, drove the chariot. A celestial voice told Kamsa at that time that the eighth child of his sister would cause his death. Kamsa at once drew his sword to kill her, but Vasudeva prevented him; to pacify Kamsa, Vasudeva offered to hand over their children from whom Kamsa apprehended death. On reaching home, Kamsa cast his sister and her husband into prison. Kamsa also deposed and imprisoned his father Ugrasena and made himself King of the Yadus, Bhojas and Surasenas. He had a number of demon-associates with whose help he oppressed the Yadus. He also made an alliance with Jarasandha, his father-in-law, King of the Magadhas. He took every son that his sister gave birth to and killed him. When he had killed six of them thus, the serpent Sesha, who was a partial incarnation of the Lord, became the seventh child in Devaki's womb; the Lord directed His Mystic Power (*Yoga-Maya*) to transfer the child from Devaki's womb to Rohini, a wife of Vasudeva in the pastoral village of Nanda, and then he himself became the eighth child of Vasudeva and Devaki. With the Lord in her womb, Devaki wore an unusual effulgence, and Kamsa understood that Hari (Vishnu), his enemy, destined to slay him, had arrived; as it was a grave sin to kill a woman, a sister, and that too in pregnancy, he was awaiting the birth of Hari; his hatred of Hari became so intense that whether he sat or lay, walked, ate or thought, he saw only Hari everywhere.

Then came that blessed moment when the whole universe took an auspicious appearance; a mild fragrant breeze blew, the sky was bright and the hearts of the good became tranquil and happy; accompanying the rolling waves of the sea, the clouds rumbled. At midnight, Lord Vishnu, who lies indeed within the depths of the

heart of everybody, appeared in the person of the divine Devaki, like the full moon in the east. To Vasudeva and Devaki, the Lord revealed His divine form; they prayed to Him: "You are born here to rid the earth of demon kings and save the world; you are the light in everybody's soul; save us from Kamsa; he will be here now with his weapon; withdraw therefore your transcendental form." The Lord took, as the parents were looking on, the form of a common baby and told them that, if they were afraid of Kamsa they might take Him to the cowherd's village (*Gokula*) and bring back instead His own *Yoga-Maya* born there as a daughter of Yasoda. Vasudeva considered it more prudent to do so and as he decided, the guards and others around fell miraculously asleep, the heavily locked doors opened, darkness waned, a fine drizzle set in, the serpent Sesha bent over the child in protection, and the deep overflowing Yamuna parted her waters; Vasudeva quietly came with the divine child to Nanda's *Gokula*; there Nanda's wife was asleep with a baby girl by her side; Vasudeva exchanged the children, returned to his prison-home, deposited the female child on Devaki's bed, replaced the iron fetters on his feet and awaited Kamsa's arrival.

Kamsa hastened to the prison of his sister, as soon as the guards announced the birth of the child: "You have killed all my sons; this is a daughter, spare her," begged Devaki, clasping her brother. Kamsa threw Devaki aside, snatched the baby by the feet and flung her against a stone; the child, the divine *Maya*, ascended into the sky, revealed herself as the Goddess with eight arms, equipped with all weapons, and addressed Kamsa: "Fool, of what avail is it for you to try to kill me? He who is to be your death has been born elsewhere; persecute not poor Devaki and Vasudeva." In the morning, Kamsa summoned his counsellors and informed them of the night's events. The ministers told him that if, as the

Goddess said, the child that was to be his death had been born somewhere, they should search all the towns, villages and hamlets, and immediately put to death all newborn babies! They added: "Sages in penance, performers of sacrifices, cows, Brahmans, Vedas, truth, self-control quietude, faith, compassion, forbearance—these are Hari's visible forms; wherever these are, we shall destroy them; thereby Hari can be effectively harmed." Kamsa approved of their plan to begin a campaign of opposition to all that Hari stood for. His agents went about harassing the good and wrecking all acts of piety.

At Nanda's village, there was great rejoicing at the birth of a beautiful son. The cowherds decked the streets with festoons and played music; the cattle were bathed and decorated; when Lord Krishna was born as their child, the cowherds knew no restraint to their joy and splashed each other with milk, curd and butter. Rohini too had conceived a divine child, which added to their happiness; from the time of the birth of these two children, there was a special charm and all-round prosperity in the *Gokula*.

Annually, Nanda had to pay his tribute to the King of Mathura; when he had been at Mathura on this work, Vasudeva met him and learnt about the welfare of the children. Vasudeva was however not easy in mind and he warned Nanda to beware of danger to the two boys.

At Kamsa's bidding, a female demon named Putana who was devouring children, a demon Sakata who had taken the form of a cart and another who took the form of a whirlwind, Trinavarta, stole into the *Gokula* to make away with Krishna; but the wonder-child did away with all of them instead.

Garga, the family priest of the Yadus, then came secretly to the *Gokula* to conduct the sacrament of naming the children; Rohini's son was given the name Rama because of his attractive qualities, Bala because of

his exceeding strength and Sankarshana because of his drawing the Yadus together. "Yasoda's child," Garga said, "is to be named Krishna because the Lord who assumed different colours in successive ages, white, red, and yellow, now took a dark hue; really His name and forms are infinite; He shall bring you welfare and joy, and with His help, you shall surmount all difficulties."

Entering boyhood, the two brothers indulged in games and pranks, releasing the calves, and stealing curds and butter. Once some boys went to Yasoda and reported that Krishna had swallowed mud. The mother caught Krishna and enquired. "No, not I; look here," said Krishna, opening his little mouth; and lo! Yasoda saw there the entire universe, static and moving, heaven and the four quarters, the luminous bodies, and earth with all her continents, mountains and seas. Yasoda realised that the son she was fondling was none other but Hari, whom the Vedas and Upanishads and the paths of knowledge, action and devotion adored. Another time Krishna broke the churn and gobbled up the butter forming in it. Yasoda in her wrath tried to catch Him whom even the minds of *yogins*, directed by penance, were unable to grasp; and she seized the Lord and tried to tie with a cord, one for whom there was no inside or outside, this side or that, front or back. She tried to tie Him with a cord to a mortar, but every time she tried, the rope was two inches too short; Krishna, seeing His poor mother in distress, submitted to the bondage; thereby He came to be called *Damodara*.[1]

Now the brothers went out to the woods on the Yamuna and tended cows along with the cowherd mates of the *Gokula*. A demon-friend of Kamsa entered the herd disguised as a calf; Krishna discovered the trick and flung him away. When taking the cows to drink, another demon-friend of Kamsa was waiting there disguised as a

[1] *Damodara*—one having a rope round his waist.

crane to pounce upon Krishna; Krishna tore the demon in twain. When one morning the brothers and their herdsmen friends had gone to the woods for a picnic, the demon Agha took the form of a huge python and tried to swallow them all; Krishna entered its open mouth, and swelled up until the python burst.

Next they went down to the sands of the river for breakfast; the cowherds with beaming faces sat round Krishna and looked like the petals of a lotus round its pericarp. Brahma wanted to enjoy further the glory of the Lord, and as the breakfast was going on in great merriment, the cows strayed and vanished, Brahma having hidden them away. Telling His friends not to stop their picnic, Krishna went out in search of the cows and calves; Brahma stole the cowherds in His absence. When Krishna saw how they had all disappeared, he multiplied Himself at once as cows, calves and cowherds, and gave each home its own cow, calf and cowherd.

Then a demon named Dhenuka in the form of an ass assailed them; Balarama, the elder brother, put an end to him. At another time, without Balarama, Krishna alone went with the friends and the cows to the Vrindavana on the banks of the Yamuna. Parched with thirst, they went to a river-pool where the water was poisoned; and cows and cowherds alike swooned on drinking the water. A serpent named Kaliya was infesting that pool and causing great damage to life. Krishna jumped into Kaliya's pool; Kaliya went in chase and coiled round Him; Krishna grew in size, and unable to hold Him with its coils, Kaliya released Him, but attacked Him with its lifted hood; the Lord mounted the serpent's hood and danced on it.[1] Unable to bear the weight of the Lord's steps, Kaliya prayed that it might be pardoned and

[1] The picture of young Krishna dancing on the uplifted hood of Kaliya is one of the very popular and widely worshipped forms of the Lord.

Krishna left it, commanding it to leave the river immediately and betake itself to the sea. The cows and cowherds then arose in joy from their swoon. Twice His cowherd friends and the cows were encircled by forest-flames and Krishna saved them by drawing the fire into Himself and miraculously transporting them in a moment to a safe place. Another time, a demon named Pralamba took the very guise of a cowherd with a view to carrying away Krishna; he was knocked down by Balarama.

The rains then set in; clouds hid the moon, even as egoism hides the soul. Rain poured down like the blessings of Brahmanas. The fresh water, like the service of the Lord, produced a fresh richness and beauty in all. Then autumn came; sky and water became transparent like minds in meditation; the mire of the roads slowly disappeared like the false notions of the ignorant; the sea was still like a self-realised soul; the moon shone like true knowledge.

Wearing yellow silk, with a peacock feather on his head and a garland of sylvan blossoms, Krishna went about in the Vrindavana playing his divine flute. The magic music fell on the ears of the cowherd lasses who became jealous of the flute that drank the sweet breath from the jewel-lips of the Lord! Cows stood still, drinking the music of the Lord's flute with upturned ears; calves stood leaving their mothers' udder and grass; the sages sat as the birds on the boughs, listening in silence to those strains! The Yamuna eddied all the more and appeared to stretch her waves like arms to clasp the tender feet of the Lord.

Winter arrived, the time of special worship of the Lord; the milkmaids (*Gopis*) observed their vow of worshipping Mother Katyayani, sustaining themselves only on the sacred food that they offered to the Goddess. Bathing at dawn in the Yamuna, they made images of

the Goddess with the river sand and worshipped Her, praying to Her, "O Goddess, the Mystic Power of the Lord! Make Krishna our husband; obeisance to you." Hand in hand, they sang of Krishna as they went down to bathe in the Yamuna.[1] They left their garments on the shore and sported in the waters. To teach them the lesson that especially those bound by vows ought not to bathe unclad, the Lord stole their garments and climbed up a tree on the bank. As they had prayed that He should become their husband, He granted their wish. He said: "The love that is directed to me can hardly be the mere desire for sensual enjoyment, for it is burnt in the fire of devotion and knowledge; burnt seeds sprout not. This vow of yours and adoration of Goddess Katyayani will be fruitful; you shall sport with Me on these autumnal nights."

Indra, the god of the heavens, was the object of an annual festival. The *Gokula* was busy preparing for the celebration. The Lord, desiring to humble Indra's pride, told them: "That by which one lives happily is one's deity; cows are our wealth, hills and forests are our homes; so let us worship the cows and this hill Govardhana." The enraged Indra made the clouds pour down a deluge and inundate the *Gokula*. The whole village turned as one man to Krishna; He raised the entire Govardhana mountain on one hand, as if it were a mushroom, and told the village to take shelter underneath, remaining like that for seven days. Indra then descended to beg pardon of the Lord. Kamadhenu, the mother of cows, came, and with her milk, Indra, along with the gods and sages, per-

[1] This episode is at the basis of the devotional poems in Tamil called *Tiruppavai* and *Tiru-p-pavai* in which the Vaishnava and Saiva mystics depict the Mind as the Lord's bride and make her wake up in the early hours of the morn her maiden friends from their slumber of Ignorance and with the song of the Lord on their lips take them all to the river for the bath. These two poems are recited and expounded in the month of *Margasirsha* (December-January).

formed the coronation ceremony of Krishna as the Lord of Cows (*Govinda*).[1]

THE MYSTIC DANCE OF THE LORD WITH THE GOPIS (RASA-LILA)

The Lord saw these autumnal nights fragrant with blown jasmines and took it into His head to sport, resorting to His Mystic Power (*Yoga-Maya*). Seeing the moon in its full orb, the Lord played most sweetly on His flute. The spell of those notes fell on the ears of the *Gopis*, and, infatuated as it were with Krishna, they came severally to where He was. "Why have you come on this terrible night? Your kith and kin will search for you; go home and serve your lords like virtuous wives. It is not so much by physical proximity to me as by hearing of Me or contemplating upon Me or singing of Me that love for Me is fostered," the Lord admonished them. "Like souls desiring release, have we sought You, abandoning everything; speak not these cruel words; we are Your devotees; accept us," replied the *Gopis*. The Lord listened to their moving words; though one always delighting in Himself, the Lord, the Great Master of *Yoga*, smiled, and in His compassion, yielded to the *Gopis*. With a garland of sylvan flowers, flute in hand, the Lord shone amidst them like the moon among the stars. Going down to the river sands, He sported with them. Now pride took possession of the hearts of the *Gopis* who had won Krishna's love; the Lord noticed their elation at their own fortune, and in order to purge their minds of evil and purify them, He disappeared from that very spot. One of them the Lord took with Him, with special consideration, but, she too, filled with pride, asked the Lord to carry her weary body; the Lord then disappeared from her also. When the Lord was no longer to be seen,

[1] The cow-linked names of the Lord, *Go-pala*, *Go-vinda*, as also names based on lifting Mount Govardhana, are some of the most popular ones taken as personal names by Hindus.

the *Gopis* assembled, and thinking of Him, speaking of Him, imitating His acts and becoming thus one with Him, they remained singing[1] of Him and expecting His arrival. "By your birth, the *Gokula* flourishes evermore, the Goddess of Prosperity abides here now. Behold, O beloved Lord! Those who are Your own, whose life-breath You are, are searching for You in every direction. You are not the son of a milkmaid; You are the immanent witness in the soul of all beings; it is to protect the world that at Brahma's own request You have manifested Yourself in the family of the Sattvatas.[2] The nectar of Your stories is the elixir that enlivens the parched souls, and which the poets sing of as the destroyer of sin; they who recite to others these stories of Yours which are like so many beautiful and large ornaments of the ear, become indeed the most generous givers in the world." Singing thus and prattling incessantly, the *Gopis*, thirsting for the sight of Krishna, wept sweetly. Then, with a smiling face, the most charming Lord presented Himself before them. As soon as He had come, they arose all at once, even as a dead body would arise on returning to life. They felt the relief people feel on meeting a man of wisdom. Surrounded by them, Krishna shone like the Self surrounded by His powers. Locking His arms with theirs, the Lord began on the sands of the river His *Rasa* Dance.[3] The Lord of mystic powers made Himself as many in number as the *Gopis* and placed Himself between every pair of them. The Lord of the Goddess of all Beauty sported

[1] The song of the *Gopis*, here, entitled the *Gopika Gita*, forms an important part of the *Bhajan*, where devotees sing it and sometimes perform with it the Lord's *Rasa* Dance also.

[2] One of the many related clans, Andhaka. Vrishni, Kukura, Bhoja, Yadava, to which Krishna belonged. The *Sattvatas* are associated with the cult of devotion to Krishna called *Sattvata* or *Pancharatra*.

[3] The dance in a circle in a particular rhythm called *Rasa*; also interpreted as being the essence of joy and bliss, *Rasa*. The immortal masterpiece of poetry, music and dance, the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva, opens on the background of *Rasa-lila*.

thus with the cowherd lasses, even as a child would play with his own reflection. The Lord, who, as the Master, was within the Gopis as well as their own husbands, took this body for sport.

Attacks from demons and others were not at an end. Krishna had to extricate His father Nanda from a serpent and kill one Sankhachuda who harassed the milkmaids; He annihilated also Arishta who ran wild in the *Gokula* in the form of a mad bull, Kesin who came in the guise of a stallion and Vyoman who took the guise of a cowherd.

The Killing of Kamsa

Kamsa then called together his remaining associates, Mushtika, Chanura and others, adepts in wrestling, and ordered them to entice the brothers Krishna and Balarama to the capital for the Bow-festival and murder them under the pretext of a wrestling match. The festival of the Worship of the Bow was proclaimed, and Kamsa bade his kinsman Akrura proceed to Nanda's place, invite everyone and bring the two brothers in particular to the Bow-festival. As he proceeded to the *Gokula*, Akrura pondered over the good fortune that made it possible for him to meet the brothers Balarama and Krishna. On hearing Kamsa's command, Nanda ordered the cowherds to collect the presents and tributes to be given to King Kamsa and made preparations for leaving for the capital on the morrow to see the King, the great festival and the crowd gathered there. The *Gopis* heard of the impending departure of the Lord to Mathura, and distracted by the pangs of separation, derided Akrura's name (meaning "not cruel") as a misnomer.

In the morning Nanda, his followers, the two brothers, and Akrura left for Mathura. On the way Akrura bathed in the Yamuna, and while under water, was blessed with the vision of the heavenly form of the

Lord, lying on the serpent-couch. Akrura praised the Lord: "By manifold paths and at the direction of manifold teachers, people worship You, the same, sole Lord. Who is of the form of all the gods; and even as all streams flow to the same ocean, so do all paths lead to You in the end." As Akrura emerged, the Lord asked him what the vision was that Akrura appeared to have seen. "Whatever wonder there is here, on earth, in water or sky, all that is comprised in You; and what wonder has not been seen by me who have seen You?" said Akrura.

The party reached Mathura as the day was drawing to a close. Akrura left them unwillingly, informed Kamsa of their arrival and retired to his home. On the next afternoon, Krishna started with his companions to see the sights of the city. As they went, the two brothers playfully snatched fine clothes from a washerman, decorated themselves with the help of others like Sudaman, a garland-maker, and a woman carrying cosmetics to the palace; the last was a hunchback and Krishna cured her of her deformity. Krishna then enquired of the people where the Bow was, defied its guards, and lifting it playfully, broke it; as the powerful bow broke, its sound reverberated and in a moment Kamsa's forces surrounded the brothers. To the amazement of the citizens, the brothers routed their opponents and departed triumphantly.

Kamsa lost even the little sleep he had these days on hearing of the exploits of the brothers; he saw evil portents and intimations, like the sudden disappearance of his head, of his coming end. Next morning Kamsa ordered the wrestling tournaments to begin; the stalls were full, and Nanda and his followers, having offered their tributes to Kamsa, sat on one side. Kamsa took his seat on the royal stand. Trumpets blared, and the royal team of Chanura, Mushtika, Kuta, Sala and Tosala sat

there, musical instruments raising their spirits. The sound of preparations in the arena reached the brothers, who hastened thither. At the gate, the driver on the elephant Kuvalayapida obstructed them and drove his beast at Krishna; Krishna killed the animal and its keeper, and armed with its tusks, the brothers entered the arena. "A thunderbolt to the wrestlers, a hero to men, god of love incarnate to women, kith of cowherds, chastiser of unruly princes, child to His parents, death to King Kamsa, the Supreme Truth to *Yogins*,"—so understood by the different onlookers, Krishna entered the arena with His brother. While the spectators were wondering at the injustice of matching the boys with such mature and renowned wrestlers, the young brothers themselves made short work of their opponents. The remaining wrestlers took to their heels. Kamsa raved wildly and called upon his men to imprison the boys, Nanda and others. But in a trice, the Lord leapt on the royal stall, caught Kamsa by his locks, threw him on the ground, fell upon him, and as the people were shouting in wonder, dragged Kamsa's corpse across the arena. As Kamsa's eight brothers fled the arena, Balarama overtook and butchered them like criminals. The heavens showered flowers and the whole universe rejoiced.

Then the brothers released their parents Vasudeva and Devaki from prison. They restored the kingdom of the Yadus to their maternal grandfather Ugrasena, whom his son Kamsa had forcibly deposed. All their kinsmen who had left the city in fear of Kamsa were brought back and settled in their homes. Krishna begged Nanda and their cowherd friends to return, promising to visit them after putting things at Mathura in order. With tears blinding their eyes and hearts heavy with sorrow, Nanda and his followers returned to the *Gokula*.

Vasudeva then entrusted his two sons to the teacher Sandipani. In return for the learning imparted by him,

Krishna restored to life the son of their *guru*, drowned in the sea at Prabhasa.

The Vrishnis had an excellent minister in Uddhava who was an especially dear friend of Krishna. The Lord requested him to go to the *Gokula* and console his friends there who were feeling His loss very bitterly. Uddhava found, when he reached the *Gokula*, every bower and part of the hill and wood fresh with the memory of Krishna's sport; everybody forgot his or her work at the recapitulation of this and that act of the Lord. Uddhava told them: "Be not oppressed with the sense of separation from Him; He is the light within every heart; for Him who is equal towards all, there is no special object of love or dislike, superior, inferior or unequal." To Nanda and Yasoda, he said: "He is not your son only; He is not only the son of all, but the Father, Mother and Master of all." To the *Gopis*, he said: "Let not distance distress you; proximity does not hold hearts so close as longing from a distance. With your hearts dedicated to Him, you shall surely attain Him shortly." The Lord then sent Akrura to Hastinapura to learn tidings about his kinsmen, the Pandavas. Akrura returned with bad news of the unfair way in which the Pandavas were being treated by their cousins and their uncle Dhritarashtra.[1]

X (B)

Kamsa's father-in-law Jarasandha now collected a number of allies and besieged Mathura in order to avenge the death of Kamsa. But Krishna saved the city and Jarasandha had to return defeated to Magadha. Krishna then built for himself the new city of Dvaraka on the seashore.

Marriages and Domestic Life

There was Bhishmaka, King of the Vidarbhas, who

[1] See the story of the Mahabharata, p. 293 ff.

had five sons and one virtuous daughter, Rukmini. Having heard of Krishna's beauty, heroism and rich endowments, she considered Him as a husband suitable for her. But Rukmin, the eldest brother, who disliked Krishna and was a partisan of Jarasandha and other enemies of His, wanted Rukmini to be given in marriage to Sisupala, King of the Chedis. Rukmini learnt with sorrow of her brother's decision and sent a message to Krishna through a Brahman. Krishna thwarted Rukmin's arrangements, carried her off to His own place Dvaraka and married her there.

Of Rukmini and Krishna was born Pradyumna, the God of Love, who as a child, had an adventure with the demon Sambara who carried him away into the sea. There Pradyumna not only killed the demon but secured Rati as his wife.

Krishna married also Jambavati, daughter of Jambavan, Satyabhama, daughter of Satrajit, Kalindi, daughter of the Sun, Mitravinda, princess of Avantis, Nagnajiti of the Kosalas who had to be won as the prize in a bull fight, Bhadra of the Kekayas and Lakshmana of Madras. The Lord was miraculously present with all, gratifying all.

The Killing of Narakasura

The Lord went to Pragjyotisha,[1] on His divine kite Garuda, and accompanied by His wife Satyabhama, and there killed the demon Naraka or Bhauma and his friend Mura. Mother Earth then appeared and revealed to the Lord how Naraka was their own son,[2] having been born when the Lord raised her from the waters in the Boar incarnation.

[1] Assam.

[2] The important all-India festival of *Dipavali* or *Naraka Chaturdasi* is also connected with this incident. It is at Earth's request at that time that the people observe the festival in Naraka's honour.

The Killing of Bana and the Marriage of Aniruddha and Usha[1]

Bali who bestowed the earth upon Vamana, begot a hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Bana, who was ruling at the city called Sonita. Bana's daughter Usha saw in a dream Aniruddha, son of Pradyumna and grandson of Krishna, and fell in love with him. Chitralekha, her friend, with her magic powers, brought Aniruddha secretly to her friend's chamber and the two lived happily together for many days. But this led to a war between Bana and Krishna in which the Lord defeated the demon and brought Aniruddha and Usha to Dvaraka.

Now the fortunes of the Pandavas at Indraprastha became closely linked with Krishna their cousin, whom they made their friend and guide in all matters.[2] Jarasandha, the father-in-law of Kamsa was killed and similarly other demoniac kings, Salva, Dantavaktra and Viduratha. The great battle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas followed, in which, as the charioteer of Arjuna, the Lord imparted His teaching[3] to Arjuna and helped the Pandavas to victory. Balarama took a different attitude and without joining either side, went on a pilgrimage.

The Story of Kuchela

After the coronation of Yudhishthira, Krishna returned to Dvaraka where there happened this most touching incident.[4] When Krishna was learning under Sandipani he had a Brahman classmate, Kuchela. In his household life later, Kuchela was afflicted by dire poverty but he was one who had no attraction to material pleasures, and having composed his mind and controlled the senses,

[1] Another popular story in literature and drama.

[2] See the Mahabharata story above.

[3] The Bhagavad-Gita; see select renderings elsewhere in this anthology (p. 404 ff.)

[4] Very popular theme of devotional discourses (*Hari-katha*).

he was content with what came of its own accord. His devoted wife, emaciated with chronic hunger, was of the same noble nature. But she once told her husband: "You have a friend in Krishna, the very Lord of the Goddess of Fortune; He is the refuge of the good, and if you approach Him, He will help this starving family." She told this more than once and Kuchela thought that at least to see his friend, he might go. As it was not proper to see any one of importance without some present or offering, Kuchela begged some *Prithuka* (fried, flattened rice), tied it up in a bundle, and walked to Dvaraka, wondering all the way whether he could at all get an audience with the Lord. But the Lord ran up to him on his arrival, took him by both hands, and welcomed him with all formal honours. That poorly clad, untidy, emaciated Brahman was attended upon by the blessed Goddess Rukmini herself. Clasping his hands, Krishna recalled the stories of their student days. Krishna said: "You are a man of learning; I know you have no longing for riches; your heart has not been spoiled by desire; you must have brought Me some present; give it to Me; even a particle given to Me by My devotees becomes ample; even an ample offering made by one who is not a devotee is not to My satisfaction. A leaf, a flower, a fruit, a little water,—if one offers these to Me in devotion with a pure mind, I enjoy that offering of devotion." Kuchela was, however, ashamed to untie a bundle which contained only four handfuls of fried rice. The Lord who read his mind, thought: "Never has this poor man made Me any offering with a request for riches; it is to please his wife that he has now come; let Me take something from him and give him in return riches such as no man can have on earth." The Lord then playfully pulled out his bundle and looking at the rice, exclaimed: "Ah! this I like very much." He took one handful of it into His mouth, but before he swallowed another, Rukmini, the Goddess of

Fortune, standing nearby, hastened to stay the Lord's hand: "This is enough, Lord, to earn the gift of all riches," she exclaimed.

That night Kuchela tarried there, and in the morning, given leave by Krishna who accompanied him to the gates, he went on his way. He did not open his mouth to ask for riches, and Krishna gave him nothing. As he walked home, he felt ashamed, but he had experienced the great joy of having seen the Lord. "Where am I and where is the Lord? He embraced me with His arms. Methinks, Krishna did not give me any wealth, because wealth may deter me from adoring Him; it is only out of compassion towards me that He is keeping me poor." It was with such thoughts that Kuchela returned home. But what did he see at his place? Hardly could he believe his eyes or recognise it, the lofty mansions, the wonderful gardens, resounding with the song of birds and the murmur of bees, and finely dressed and bedecked men and women busily going to and fro. With music, men and women attendants received him. It was only when his wife came out to receive him with an obeisance, that Kuchela recognised his home, entered it and realised that the Lord had given him that untold fortune in return for his handful of rice; but like the devotee and the man of knowledge that he was, Kuchela would not be led astray by worldly comforts; he developed no craving nor lost his spirit of detachment.

There happened then at Dvaraka an episode which effectively taught humility to Arjuna who was proud of his prowess. A Brahman couple was regularly losing their offspring, and Arjuna happened to be present when the Brahman came to Krishna's door, laid the latest dead child there and complained that if rulers were righteous, such calamities would not occur. Arjuna offered to protect the next born, and when the Brahman lady next gave birth to a child, he erected all around the apartment an

impenetrable wall of arrows. Within that hedge of arrows, the lady was delivered of a child, but it immediately disappeared. The Brahman derided the vanity of Arjuna, and unable to endure the humiliation, he proceeded bow in hand to the city of the God of Death himself; he scoured all the worlds above and below and the four quarters, but could not find the child. Arjuna was about to end his shame by mounting the pyre, when Krishna, who was mentally witnessing the whole episode, prevented him, sent His blazing discus and brought back from death all the nine sons of the Brahman. Arjuna realised the glory of Vishnu completely and understood that whatever valour there was in any man, it was only what the Lord, in His compassion, had infused into him.[1]

XI

The Lord had rid the Earth of many of the demoniac kings, Kamsa, Duryodhana and their allies. Power and affluence, as the Lord again and again pointed out, always corrupted; it turned the head and led successful men to arrogant and insulting behaviour towards others; therefore the Lord, again and again, declared that when He wanted to bless a man, He stripped him bare. Now, the clans among whom He had chosen to manifest Himself, became elated, and it became necessary for the Lord to remove them before He Himself departed from this world and brought to a close the mission of His incarnation as Krishna.

Evil portents appeared at Dvaraka, the new city of the Lord; He therefore begged His friends and subjects to leave Dvaraka and go to Prabhasa. The situation was shot with poignant feeling and none could refrain from anxious thought. Uddhava, His beloved cousin and

[1] The Lord as the bestower of children is called *Santana Gopala,* and this episode from the Bhagavata is particularly popular in Malabar where several poems based on it are current.

wise minister, approached Krishna, unable to contemplate upon the impending disaster and the final disappearance of the Lord from their midst. "My Lord! I cannot bear leaving You; pray take me to Your abode," said he. Then did the Lord vouchsafe to Uddhava teachings as precious as those that He imparted to Arjuna on the battlefield. The Lord said: "Uddhava, you are My devotee and My dear friend; hence do I reveal to you. On the seventh day from now, the sea will flood Dvaraka, and not very much later than that the dark age of *Kali* will engulf the world. In a world devoid of Me, you must not remain; you must renounce every worldly association, and roam about, fixing your tranquil mind on Me alone. With senses and mind under control, see the world within your own heart and your self in Me, the Over-Lord. The wise exalt themselves by their own self-endeavour; the Self is the *Guru par excellence*. Learn from these objects of Nature: though trampled on by all, be firm in your adversity like this very earth; from these mountains which bear their mineral and other resources for the weal of the world, learn that you should live for others and not for yourself; like wind, you should be able to pass through untouched; pervasive, touching everything, yet itself untouched, the sky is indeed the best example of the *Yogin*; you should be limpid, pure, purifying, pleasing and refreshing like water; effulgent with the lustre of knowledge like fire, and reducing to ashes all impurity; like a python, lie still and take only what befalls you, and when nothing comes, fast like the same python; like the sea, deep and unfathomable, neither swell up by what flows into you nor dry up by what is taken from you; like a bee, take in little by little; and from good and bad, extract the essence even as the bee does honey."

The Lord then told Uddhava of the characteristics of the liberated (*Mukta*): "Remaining in the body, the wise man is yet not of it; when experiences occur by the

interaction of material forces, he does not identify his Self with them, nor delude himself as the doer; he should remain unmoved by the praise or blame of others, nor himself indulge in them; revelling in the Self, wander as if insensate." For those who are unequal yet to this high calling, the Lord then said: "Do then your acts but in a spirit of dedication to Me; in your pursuit of meritorious duty, material gain or emotional gratification, take your stand on Me; with the association of the good and the pure you will soon reach Me through devotion."

On Uddhava's query, the Lord then described the character of the good man (*Sadhu*): "Compassionate, unharmful and forbearing towards all, having truth as his strength, equal and helpful to all, with a mind not ruined by desires, subdued, mild, clean, unburdened by possessions, without craving, moderate in acquisition, quiet, firm, silent and meditative, with a spirit surrendered to Me, careful, deep and unperturbed, devoid of pride, honouring others, fit, friendly, merciful, endowed with imagination—such is the nature of the good and pure Soul."

The nature of the true devotees (*Bhaktas*) of the Lord was then described by Him: "Giving up everything, and every other duty, they who worship Me alone, with no other purpose in view, are My best devotees. Adoration of My devotees and My symbols, service, singing of My praise, recital of My story, listening to such recital, the sense of being My servant while acquiring worldly goods, and surrender to Me, freedom from pride and vanity, refraining from advertising his achievements—such are the features of a devotee of Mine who would attain Me through devotion."

The Lord then stressed the need for association with the pure and the good (*Sat-sanga*) which He praised as a more potent means to secure Him than anything else.

Describing the three dispositions of the mind, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, the Lord emphasized that one should cultivate the *Sattva guna*. From the good, enlightened and happy state of *Sattva* proceeded virtue and devotion. From the fickle, passionate and feverish attitude of *Rajas*, desire arose and led man into the slavery of the senses and into misery. "Without indolence, getting beyond *Rajas* and *Tamas*, man should strive to fix his mind on Me, never despairing of success; thus is *Yoga* secured."

The Lord continued: "To one who has denuded himself of all lumber, subdued his mind, is tranquil, serene and contented, there is happiness everywhere. That unexpecting sage who is peaceful, free from enmity and of an equanimous attitude, I Myself, O Uddhava, follow, hoping that I too may be sanctified by the dust of his feet! Devotion to Me sanctifies the worst of men."

The Lord next described the ecstasy of devotional feeling; "How can man's mind be purified without horripilation, melting of heart and tears of joy experienced in My devotion? His voice becomes inarticulate; his mind melts; now he weeps and now laughs; casting aside shame, he sings aloud and dances; such a devotee of Mine sanctifies the world indeed."

Uddhava asked the Lord how he should practise contemplation (*Dhyana*) and the Lord gave him detailed directions. "Sit evenly, erect, at ease, with palms folded on the lap, with eyes fixed on the nose; cleanse your lungs by taking a deep breath, holding it in and then discharging it, raise in your heart the *OM* sounding like the tolling of a bell, and in the lotus of your heart, contemplate My form as encircled by light."

The Lord then described the path of contemplating everything of distinction in the world as an aspect of His own glory (*Vibhuti-yoga*). The Lord set forth also the duties of men in different classes and stations of life

and the path of attaining Him through the performance of these duties (*Karma-yoga*). On the three paths of knowledge, works and devotion, the Lord said: "*The path of knowledge is for those who are weary of life; those who have yet desires should pursue the path of sublimation through works; and to those who are not completely indifferent nor too much attached the devotional path bears fruit.*"

Summing up His teachings to Uddhava, the Lord said: "Perform your actions for Me and with thoughts fixed on Me; untainted like the sky, see yourself within your self; consider all beings as Myself and adore them; bow to everybody, high or low, great or small, kind or cruel; by seeing Me constantly in all, rid yourself of jealousy, intolerance, violence and egoism. Casting aside your pride, prestige, and sense of shame, fall prostrate in humility before all, down to the dog and ass. This is the knowledge of the learned, the wisdom of the wise,—that man attains the Real (Me) with the unreal (body) and the Immortal with the mortal."

Uddhava could not speak for a time; tears choked him; collecting himself and falling at the Lord's feet, he said: "You have driven away the darkness of ignorance, and placed in my hand the lamp of knowledge." The Lord bade him go to Badarikasrama and practise these lessons of His. Uddhava acted accordingly and eventually attained Lord Hari's own abode.

THE END OF THE YADAVAS AND THE LORD'S DEPARTURE

When ominous signs were seen, the Yadavas left Dvaraka according to Krishna's direction and reached Prabhasa. There they indulged in heavy drinking; when a man's end is near, his senses take leave of him. Intoxicated, they fought with each other on the beach and fell. Balarama then sat on the seashore in *Yoga* until he lost his mortal frame; then the Lord likewise sat on the

ground underneath a tree and from there departed from the scene of His earthly activities. The celestial beings rained flowers and sang, and the effulgence that was the Lord shot across the firmament like a flash of lightning.

XII

The Kalki or the Incarnation of the Future

In Magadha and other centres, royal dynasties would arise in the *Kali* age, the Nandas, the Mauryas, the Sungas, the Kanvayanas, the Andhrabhrityas, the Abhiras, the Gardabhins, the Yavanas, the Guptas, the Mlecchas and others. Religion would be at a low ebb. When the well-regulated duties would have all been lost along with the Vedic path, when heresy would have spread, when kings would have become thieves, when men would be living by stealing, falsehood and wanton killing, and when human nature would have become harsh and severe, —then the Lord would appear as Kalki at the village of Sambhala, in the Brahman family of Vishnuyasas. Riding a horse and wielding a sword, he would rid the earth of the thieves, miscalled rulers; the iron age would then be at an end; the golden age of Krita would be ushered in, and a new *Sattvic* humanity, enlightened, benevolent and chaste, would come into being.

The Salvation of Parikshit

Suka then made a special exhortation to Parikshit who had been listening to the history of the kings; "King so have all gone, all those who thought earth was their own. Earth indeed laughs at these kings, who, being themselves playthings in the hands of death, were bragging about conquering the earth. What is this conquest of the world compared to the conquest of Self? These stories of the passing away of the most illustrious kings are intended to produce dispassion and non-attachment."

Referring to his curse and his impending death through the serpent, Suka exhorted Parikshit: "Fix your mind on the Lord; give up the mere animal notion that you are about to die. Man was neither previously absent nor is he going to be no more. As when a pot is broken, the ether inside becomes one with the ether outside, even so, when the body decays, the individual Self becomes one with the Supreme Self. Think of yourself as that Supreme Self, the Supreme Effulgence, and you will not even see the serpent Takshaka biting you. The sense of difference between you and another will cease."

Parikshit said: "In compassion, you have blessed me and I have been fortunate that you have told me of the Lord who has neither beginning nor end. I am not afraid of death in the form of Takshaka or others. You have shown me the great welfare, the Lord's Supreme abode. Give me leave; I shall now hold my speech, direct my mind into the Lord and give up my life."

Suka blessed the King and left. On the bank of the Ganga, the King sat facing the north, becoming in deep *Yoga* the Brahman itself. The serpent bit his body and reduced it to ashes. Celestial drums rumbled; celestial minstrels sang; the gods showered flowers and applauded.

This *Purana* is a veritable lamp of Truth; Obeisance to Sage Suka who gave it to us.

VII. THE BHAGAVAD GITA

(The Lord's discourse to Arjuna on the battlefield, in 18 chapters, Mahabharata, Book VI, Chapters 25-42)

CHAPTER II

i. No Death for the Self

Verses 13, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25.

Just as in this body the soul goes through (the states of) boyhood, youth and old age, even so does it pass on to another body; the wise man is not deluded by this. But know as imperishable that by which all this is pervaded, and of this which is imperishable, none can bring about the destruction. He who takes this Self as the killer and he who takes it as killed, neither knows; it neither kills nor is it killed. It is neither born nor does it ever die; nor, having been once, does it cease to come into being again; unborn, eternal, permanent and ancient, it is not killed when the body is killed. Even as man casts off old clothes and takes others that are new, even so casting off the worn-out body, the Self assumes one that is fresh. It cannot be cut, burnt, drenched or parched; it is eternal, all-pervasive, steadfast and motionless. It is unmanifest, inscrutable and immutable; hence having known this (Self) as such, you must not grieve.

ii. How Best to Do Your Duty

Verses 47-50.

Your concern lies only with action, never with its fruits; do not have the fruit as the motive of your action; nor become prone to inaction. Arjuna, establishing yourself in *Yoga,* do your acts without attachment, keeping yourself in equanimity in success and failure; equanimity is *Yoga*. The act (done with desire for fruit) is far inferior, O Arjuna, to equanimity of mind; take refuge in

equanimity; miserable are those actuated by desire for rewards. One with this equanimous mind transcends both the good and the bad; therefore apply yourself to equanimity; that equanimity constitutes adeptness in action.

iii. ONE OF ESTABLISHED KNOWLEDGE

Verses 55-58, 62-66, 68-71.

Arjuna, when one casts out all desires from his mind and finds contentment in the Self alone without external yearning, then is he said to be one of established knowledge. He whose mind is not agitated when he is in misery, is free from craving when he is in happiness, from whom desire, fear and anger are gone, is said to be the sage of established knowledge. Having had manifold experiences pleasant and unpleasant, he who, without attachment anywhere, neither rejoices nor despises, his knowledge is well established. When, like a tortoise that draws in its limbs on all sides, he withdraws his senses from all sense-objects, his knowledge is well established.

When man ponders over the objects of sense, attachment to them is bred; from attachment is desire born; from desire, anger arises; delusion is bred from anger; confusion of memory from delusion; ruin of intellect from loss of memory, and on the ruin of the intellect he is completely lost. But when a man of subjugated mind resorts to sense-objects (such as are inevitable), with his senses rid of likes and dislikes and under his control, he attains serenity. When serenity is achieved, all his sorrows come to an end; to him of serene mind then, knowledge becomes well established. No knowledge or contemplation is possible for one devoid of equanimity; for one devoid of contemplation, there is no peace; wherefore happiness for the restless one? Therefore, O valorous Arjuna, he whose senses have been completely

kept away from their objects, his knowledge is well established.

When it is night to all others, the man of self-control keeps vigilant; where other beings keep awake, then it is night for the sage of vision.

He into whom all desires flow, even as waters into the ocean, which though continuously filled is immovably fixed, such a man attains composure, not he who continues to hanker after desires. He attains composure who, abandoning all desires, goes about without craving and without the sense of "mine" and "I."

CHAPTER III

iv. Karma-Yoga (The Path of Acts)

Verses 3-5, 8, 9.

In this world, I expounded of yore, O impeccable Arjuna, two kinds of spiritual life,—through the path of knowledge for the reflective and through that of action for the active. Man does not reach a state of passivity by merely desisting from acts; nor does he attain realisation merely by renunciation. Not even a moment does one remain without action of some kind; for involuntarily is everyone made to act because of the dispositions of Nature. Surely, perform your duties; doing them is better than not doing; even the carrying on of your physical existence will not be possible if you do not. Apart from action that is dedicated to the Lord, all action in this world becomes bondage; hence, O Arjuna, perform your duty without attachment.

CHAPTER IV

v. The Lord's Incarnation

Verses 6-9.

Though I am unborn and imperishable, though I am the Lord of all beings, I, taking My stand on Nature

which is Mine own, manifest Myself through My own mystic power. Whenever virtue languishes and vice gains strength, then I manifest Myself. For saving the good, for destroying the evil-doers and for the purpose of establishing virtue well, I manifest Myself from age to age. My birth and act alike are divine; he who knows this in truth does not, after forsaking his body, take another; O Arjuna, he comes to Me. In whatever manner men seek Me, in that same manner do I also reach out to them.

vi. KNOWLEDGE

Verses 33-39.

Superior to adoration with material accessories is adoration with knowledge, O destroyer of enemies! All action finds its end, O Arjuna, in knowledge. Learn that by obedience, enquiry and service; the wise who have seen the truth will teach you that knowledge, by knowing which you will not succumb to such delusion again, O Arjuna, and by which you will see all the beings in yourself and also in Me.

Even if you are the worst among all sinners, all that sin you will cross over on the raft of knowledge. Just as a blazing fire reduces the fuel to ashes, even so, Arjuna, does the fire of knowledge reduce to ashes all actions. There is no purifier here comparable to knowledge; that knowledge, one who has succeeded completely in *Yoga* attains, by himself, in his Self in course of time. He who has faith, is intent on it and has controlled his senses attains that knowledge; having gained that knowledge, he finds ere long supreme peace.

CHAPTER V

vii. *Sama,* THE ONE COMMON TRUTH IN ALL

Verses 18-19.

In the Brahman endowed with learning and disci-

pline, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog and in one who eats dog's meat, the wise see the same (Common Self). Even here have they overcome birth, those whose minds are established in the state of that One Common Truth; the Brahman, the Supreme Being, is indeed that one Common Truth, freed of the accidental taints; hence they (the wise that see the One Common Truth) are established in the Brahman.

CHAPTER VI

viii. Real Renunciation

Verse 1.

He who performs his ordained duty without seeking its fruit, he is (in truth) a man of renunciation, and a man of action as well, not he who has given up the sacred fire and the acts.

ix. Balance

Verses 16-17.

Neither for the glutton nor for the completely starving one is there *Yoga*; it is also not for one who sleeps too much or keeps awake (too much). *Yoga* proves a (real) remover of suffering for him who is duly moderate in his food and relaxation, activity, sleep and vigil.

CHAPTER VII

x. The Lord

Verses 6-14, 16-19, 21.

I am the origin and end of the entire universe. There is nothing beside Me, O Arjuna. On Me is all this strung, like beads on a string.

Arjuna, I am the taste in water, the light in the moon and the sun, the mystic syllable *OM* in all the Vedas, sound in the ether, manliness in men, the pleasant odour in earth, the brilliance in fire, the life in all beings

and penance in the ascetics. Arjuna, know Me to be the perennial seed of all beings. I am the intellect of the intelligent and the boldness of the bold; in the strong, I am the strength that is free from avarice and attachment; in human beings, I am the desire that is consistent with righteousness, O Arjuna.

Things enlightened, passionate or stupid—know all of these to come only from Me; I am not in them, (but) they are in Me; deluded by these things constituted of the three dispositions (enlightenment, passion and stupidity, the *Gunas*), this whole universe does not realise Me. the Imperishable beyond these (three material constituents). This mystic Illusion (*Maya*) of Mine, made up of the three dispositions, is hard to pass; those who take refuge in Me surmount this Illusion.

Four kinds of men of virtue seek Me, O Arjuna—the sufferer, the inquisitive, the seeker of material gain and the wise; of these the wise man, always concentrated on Me and solely devoted to Me, is the best; dear am I, to the utmost, to the wise man, and he to Me; all these (four) are no doubt noble, but the wise man I deem to be verily Mine own Self.

At the end of many births, the wise man understands Me, that I, Vasudeva, am everything; he is a Mahatma (Great Soul) who is extremely rare.

Whoever the devotee, and whatever the form of God which he desires to worship with faith, I render firm for each his particular faith itself.

CHAPTER VIII

xi. The Last Moments

Verses 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16, 24-26.

With the thought of whatever object one gives up his body at the end of his life, that he attains, O Arjuna, having been ever engrossed with it; therefore at all

times[1] remember Me and fight; with your mind and intellect offered to Me, you shall, without fail, reach Myself. He who contemplates that hoary Sage and Teacher, subtler than the subtle, the Father of all, of imponderable form, that Being beyond darkness which is of the hue of the sun, (he who contemplates) that Being at the time of his death with steady mind and devotion and bringing together by force of *Yoga* the vital breath to the centre of the brows,—he attains that Supreme Divine Being. Uttering *OM*, which is Brahman in a single syllable, and thinking of Me, he who departs attains the supreme state on leaving his body.

The worlds (above), from that of the creator, involve return to birth, O Arjuna; but having come to Me, there is no rebirth.

Fire, light, day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the Sun's northern course,—those knowers of the Brahman who depart this way attain the Brahman. Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, the six months of the Sun's southern course, by this way the *Yogin* reaches the light of the moon and returns. These are deemed the two eternal paths of the world,—the bright and the dark; by the one, man reaches the state from which there is no return; by the other, he returns again.

CHAPTER IX

xii. The Devotee

Verses 22, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31.

Those who, without thought of another, think of Me and worship Me, for them ever engrossed in Me, I bear the burden for their welfare.

Whosoever offers to Me in devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that offering given in devotion by a pure

[1] For one does not know when his last moments will come.

soul, I take. Whatever, O Arjuna, you do, eat, offer, give, whatever austerity you practise,—dedicate that to Me.

I am the same in all beings; there is none for Me to be hated or loved; however, those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I in them.

Even he who happens to be very bad in his conduct, if he adores Me without resorting to another, he is to be considered a good man; for he has resolved rightly; soon, he becomes virtuous and attains everlasting peace; Arjuna, I swear, a devotee of Mine is never lost.

CHAPTER X

xiii. Divine Manifestations

Verses 40-42.

There is no end to My divine manifestations, O warrior Arjuna! Whatever thing is endowed with grandeur, beauty, or energy, know that as born of a spark of My splendour.

But why should you know all this, O Arjuna? By a single particle of Mine, I stand pervading this whole universe.

CHAPTER XII

xiv. He Who Is Dear to the Lord

Verses 13-20.

He who spites not any being, is friendly, compassionate, free from the sense of possession and ego, equanimous in misery and happiness, forbearing, ever contented, a *Yogin,* controlled in mind, of firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me,—that devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

He of whom the world is not afraid and who is not afraid of the world, who is free from exhilaration, wrath, fear or agitation,—he is dear to Me. Expecting nothing,

pure, capable, unconcerned, unperturbed, renouncing all undertakings, such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me. He who neither rejoices nor dislikes, neither sorrows nor expects, renounces the good as well as the bad, that devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

Alike to friend and foe, as well as in honour and humiliation, alike in heat and cold as well as in happiness and misery, free from attachment, alike in blame or praise, silent, content with whatever comes, homeless, of steadfast mind,—such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

They who adore in this righteous way leading to immortality as set forth above and have faith and hold Me as their supreme goal,—those devotees are very dear to Me.

CHAPTER XIII

xv. Knowledge and Ignorance

Verses 7-11.

Absence of pride and hypocrisy, non-violence, forbearance, straightforwardness, waiting upon the teacher, purity, firmness, control of the senses, dispassion towards sense-objects, absence of egoism, insight into birth and death, old age, disease and misery as evil, non-attachment, not being engrossed in son, wife, house and the like, constant equanimity of mind in desirable and undesirable happenings, unswerving devotion to Me without seeking anything else, resorting to solitude, restlessness in a crowd, being ever established in Self-knowledge, pondering over things conducive to the knowledge of Truth,—this is said to be Knowledge; what is different from this is Ignorance.

xvi. He Who Sees Truly

Verses 27-30.

He sees truly who sees the Supreme Lord abiding equally in all beings, imperishable amidst things perish-

ing. Seeing the one Common Truth, the Lord, established in everything, he does not harm Self by Self; thereby he attains the supreme goal. He sees truly who sees all acts as done only by Nature, and the Self as non-doer. When he sees the separateness of beings centred in the One and their unfolding as proceeding only from that One, he becomes the Brahman.

CHAPTER XIV

xvii. THE THREE DISPOSITIONS (*Gunas*)

Verses 5-13.

Sattva, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are dispositions born of Nature; they bind the imperishable Self in this body, O Arjuna. Of these, being pure and wholesome, *Sattva* is enlightening, and it binds through ties of happiness and knowledge. Know *Rajas* to be of the form of passion, born of avarice and attachment; Arjuna, *Rajas* binds the Self by ties of action. Know *Tamas* as born of nescience and as the deluder of all beings; Arjuna, it binds through negligence, sloth and sleep.

Arjuna! (sometimes) there is *Sattva*, overpowering both *Rajas* and *Tamas*; (sometimes) *Rajas* overpowering *Sattva* and *Tamas*, and *Tamas* overpowering *Sattva* and *Rajas*. When, in this body, there happens illumination in all the faculties and there is knowledge, then one should know that *Sattva* has been predominant. When *Rajas* becomes predominant, O Arjuna, there arise avarice, activity, undertaking of acts, restlessness and craving. When *Tamas* predominates, O Arjuna, there come about obscurity, inactivity, carelessness and delusion.

xviii. HE WHO HAS TRANSCENDED THE THREE DISPOSITIONS (THE *Guna-atita*)

Verses 19, 20, 22-26.

When the enlightened man sees no doer beyond the dispositions and realises the Supreme beyond the dis-

positions, then he attains My state. Transcending these three dispositions born of the physical body, man becomes liberated from birth and death, old age and suffering, and attains the Immortal.

Whether it is light, passion or delusion, he who does not frown when they come over him nor long for them; sitting like one indifferent, unmoved by the dispositions, he who says, "O, the dispositions are in (mutual) play!" and just remains and moves not; he who delights in the intellect and is equanimous in happiness and misery; established in himself, equal towards a clod of earth, stone and gold, towards the desirable and the undesirable, towards praise or blame, towards honour or dishonour, towards friend and foe, and has forsaken all worldly undertakings,—he is called one who has transcended the dispositions (*Guna-atita*). And he who worships Me with unswerving devotion transcends these three dispositions and qualifies himself for becoming Brahman.

CHAPTER XVI

xix. Divine and Demoniac Endowments

Verses 1-5, 21.

Freedom from fear, purity of mind, a firm stand in Self-knowledge and in the *Yogic* means thereto, charity, self-control, sacrifice, recital of scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, non-violence, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, quietude, refraining from calumny, compassion towards all beings, freedom from craving, gentleness, shame at doing wrong, absence of fickleness, power, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred and arrogance,—these come, Arjuna, to one who has been born with the divine endowment.

Hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, wrath, severity, ignorance,—these come to one born with demoniac endowment.

Divine endowment makes for liberation, demoniac, for bondage.

This is the threefold gate to hell leading to the ruin of Self,—lust, anger and avarice; therefore one must abandon this triad.

CHAPTER XVII

XX. Three Kinds of Faith

Verses 2-22.

The faith of men, engendered by their nature, is of three kinds, the exalted (*Sattvic*), the impetuous (*Rajasic*) and the stupid (*Tamasic*); hear of it. The faith of everyone is according to his mind, O Arjuna! Man is made of his faith; what his faith is, that he is.

The exalted worship the gods, the impetuous the Rakshasas (demons) and the Yakshas (demi-gods), and the stupid people, the dead ones and the goblins.

Those people who do penances of utmost severity, not enjoined in scriptures, in vanity and egoism, out of desire, passion and physical force, mortifying thoughtlessly the elements of the body as well as Me, the Dweller within the body,—know them as men of demoniac determination.

Similarly, the food that people prefer is also of three kinds, as are also sacrifice, penance and the making of gifts; listen to their distinction.

Foods which promote longevity, stamina, strength, health, happiness, cheerfulness, and which are dainty, unctuous, sustaining, and agreeable are dear to the exalted ones. Foods which are bitter, sour, salt, very hot, pungent, hard and burning are dear to the passionate and they produce misery, sorrow and disease. The food that is old, devoid of taste, putrid and stale, the leavings of others and unclean is eaten by the stupid.

That sacrifice is exalted which is sanctioned by scriptural injunction, is offered by those who expect no fruit and have set their minds on it solely because it is enjoined. Know that sacrifice, Arjuna, as born of passion which is performed with intention on fruit and out of vanity. Sacrifices performed without prescribed rites and gift of food, devoid of sacred chants (*mantras*) and fees, and barren of faith is said to be stupid.

Worship of the gods, Brahmans, teachers and learned men, purity, straightforwardness, continence, non-violence,—these are said to be physical austerity. Speech that does not make another shudder, is true, pleasing and benevolent, and the cultivation of one's own scriptural study is said to be verbal austerity. Serenity of mind, goodness, silence, self-control, purity of intention, —this is said to be mental austerity. That threefold penance, they say, is exalted when it is performed by men with perfect faith, without expecting the fruits and with concentrated mind. That penance which is practised in order to win esteem, honour and admiration, and for vanity's sake is said to be based on passion, fickle and transient in effect. That penance is said to be stupid which is performed out of a foolish obsession, with self-torture or to annihilate another.

That gift is exalted which is given because it should be given, is given to one who is not a previous benefactor, and is given in proper place and time and to a deserving person. That gift which is given as a return for a good turn or in expectation of a fruit and under pressure is the outcome of passion. That gift is said to be stupid which is given at an improper time and place and to the undeserving, without due form and in a humiliating manner.

CHAPTER XVIII

xxi. True Renunciation

Verses 2, 5, 6, 7.

The renunciation of the optional acts, the sages consider as (proper) renunciation; and (true) resignation, the wise say, is the relinquishment of the fruits of all acts. The act of sacrifice, gift and penance is not to be abandoned; it should be performed; to those of knowledge, sacrifice, gift and penance are purifying. These acts too should, it is My most considered opinion, be performed, abandoning attachment and fruits. It is improper to renounce the ordained duty.

xxii. The Yoga of Doing One's Ordained Duty

Verses 45-48.

Everyone devoted to his duty attains success; listen how one devoted to his own duty attains success. By doing his duty as an act of worship of Him from whom all beings come and by whom is all this pervaded, man attains success. Doing one's duty, however imperfectly, is superior to another's duty well performed; by doing an act ordained for one's state one incurs no sin. One's own natural duty one should not, O Arjuna, give up, though it is defective; for all acts are enveloped by defect, even as fire by smoke.

xxiii. Taking Refuge in the Lord (*Saranagati*)

Verses 61, 62, 65, 66.

O Arjuna, the Lord is stationed in the heart of all beings, causing all to revolve by His mystic power, as if on a machine. In Him, O Arjuna, take refuge with all your heart; by His grace, you will get the supreme peace and the eternal abode. Have your mind in Me; be My devotee; perform sacrifice for Me, bow to Me, and you shall reach Me; I promise you in truth; for you are dear

to Me. Abandoning all acts, take refuge in Me alone; I will deliver you from all sins; grieve not.

VIII. SELECT PRAYERS

I. SUN

THE ADITYA-HRIDAYA (THE HYMN ENTITLED "THE HEART OF THE SUN")

(Valmiki's Ramayana, VI. 107. 4-26; imparted by sage Agastya to Rama, the hero of the Epic Ramayana on the eve of the last encounter with Ravana; Rama recites the hymn thrice, engages Ravana and slays him.[1])

One must recite every day the sacred *Aditya-hridaya* which destroys all foes, brings success, and embodies imperishable and supreme well-being; which constitutes the auspiciousness of all things auspicious, annihilates all sin, allays anxiety and sorrow, and is the supreme augmenter of longevity.

Adore the Sun rising with all his rays, receiving the obeisance of gods and demons, the shining author of light.

Effulgent source of rays of light, He is indeed the embodiment of all gods; He, in fact, protects with His rays all the gods and demons and the worlds. He is Himself Brahma, Vishnu, Siva,[2] Skanda,[3] Prajapati,[4] Indra,[5] Kubera,[6] Time, the god of Death, the Moon, the Lord of the waters, the manes, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Asvins, the Maruts,[7] Manu,[8] Wind, Fire, all living be-

[1] See above, the story of the Ramayana, p. 269.

[2] Brahma, Vishnu, Siva,—the three members of the Hindu Trinity, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer.

[3] Skanda, Siva's son, the youthful war-god who led the gods to victory.

[4] Prajapati, lord of beings, the progenitor.

[5] Indra, King of gods and heaven.

[6] Kubera, lord of wealth.

[7] Vasus to Maruts, different kinds of divine and semi-divine beings.

[8] Manu, Progenitor of mankind, first King of the solar race and Lawgiver.

ings, life itself, the author of seasons and the creator of light. He who, with His rays, consumes, produces, propels; who traverses the skies like a bird, shines like gold, creator of the days and the golden sower of the seed (of the universe). Riding seven green steeds and with a thousand rays, He routs darkness and bestows welfare. He is the shaper of all things and with pervasive rays, He revivifies the moribund universe. He is the primordial creator; cold as well as heat; light and sound;[1] the bearer of fire, shining like a conch-shell, the remover of frost and the son of the heavenly mother Aditi. Lord of the skies and shatterer of darkness, He encompasses the three Vedas, Rik, Yajus and Saman;[2] cause of the downpour of rain, He is the friend of waters; and He sweeps across the path of the Vindhya mountain. A hot tawny disc, He burns everything and is indeed death; (but) He is also the universal creator, greatly effulgent, loving and the source of all good.

Master of the stars, planets and constellations, O Sun, you are the guardian of the world; you are the giver of light to all luminaries; obeisance to you who appear in twelve forms.[3]

Obeisance to the mount of sunrise in the east, obeisance to that of sunset in the west; obeisance to the Lord of the luminous bodies and the day. Obeisance again and again to Him who is success and the success of well-being, the Lord on the green steeds; repeated obeisance to the thousand-rayed God. Obeisance to the formidable, to the stimulator, to the stag that speeds; obeisance to Him who awakens the lotus and the dead world to life. Obeisance to the Sun who is the overlord of Brahma, Siva

[1-2] The solar energy itself gets transformed into sonant energy and takes the form of the three Vedas at the three junctures (*Sandhyas*) of the day, morning, noon and evening.

[3] As presiding over the twelve months of the year, the Sun takes twelve forms, Indra, Dhatar, Bhaga, Pushan, Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Archis, Vivasvat, Tvashtar, Savitar and Vishnu.

and Vishnu, whose effulgence takes the form of the various gods, the shining one of terrible form who consumes everything. Obeisance to Him, the unlimited, the shining Lord of the luminous who destroys darkness, frost, enemies, and ungrateful beings. Obeisance to Him who shines like burnt gold, who is the fire that moulds the world, the Sun who strikes at darkness and is a witness of the universe.

He is the master who destroys and makes again the world; with His rays, He draws, heals and rains. Firmly established (in all), He is awake when other beings are asleep; He is himself the fire-offering and the fruit that its performers obtain. Of the Vedas, sacrifices and the fruits thereof, indeed whatever acts there are in the worlds, of all that this Sun is the lord.

Singing of his glory in calamities and difficulties, in lonely forests and fright, a man escapes disaster, O Raghava![1] With concentration, worship this God of gods, the Lord of the world; by repeating this hymn thrice, you will be victorious in battle.

II. VISHNU

1. The Vishnu-Sahasra-Nama (The Thousand Names of Lord Vishnu)

(The Mahabharata, Anusasana parvan, Chapter 254; imparted to King Yudhishthira as part of the instructions given by Bhishma on his deathbed.[2])

Having listened to all the *dharmas*, sanctifying in every way, Yudhishthira again addressed Bhishma: "Which is the sole divinity in the world? What is the one supreme path? By praising and worshipping Whom will men attain weal? What *dharma*, according to you,

[1] Name of Rama, as scion of Raghu.

[2] See above, the story of the Mahabharata, p. 347.

is supreme among all *dharmas*? And by reciting which, will a being born here be released from the fetters of birth and rebirth?"

Bhishma replied: "If man, with constant endeavour, praises the Lord of the universe, the unlimited Supreme Being, with His Thousand Names, if he worships daily and with devotion the same imperishable Being, meditating on Him, praising Him, bowing to Him, and making offerings to Him, if he sings daily the praise of that Great Lord of the whole universe, Vishnu, who has neither beginning nor end and presides over the world, he overcomes all unhappiness. * * * If man should constantly adore in devotion the lotus-eyed Lord with hymns, that according to me, is supreme over all the *dharmas*. * * * The God of gods, He who is the eternal Father of all living beings, from whom all beings proceed on the advent of the primary æon[1] and into whom they disappear again when the æon comes to an end, of that Lord of the whole world, the Chief of all beings, hear from me O King, these Thousand Names which drive away sin and fear! The celebrated names of the great Lord which are based on His qualities, and which the sages have sung, I shall proclaim for the weal (of the world):

"He who is of the form of the Universe and is All-pervasive, who is of the form of Sacrifice, who is the Lord of the past, future and present, the Creator of all living beings, their Sustainer and their existence, their Indweller and Well-wisher; the Pure and Supreme Being, the highest goal of the liberated, the imperishable Spirit that is the Onlooker and the eternal Knower of the body; who is the Path and the Leader among those

[1] Time, within whose range the history of the world,—its origin, the creation of life and the activities of living beings—takes place, is described as a revolving cycle of four major æons (*yuga*) or periods, Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali.

that know the path, Himself Matter, Spirit and God, the Supreme Being who took the form of the Man-lion,[1] who has rays of light as hair, and possesses the Goddess of Fortune; the All, the Destroyer, the Beneficent, the Steadfast, the Prime Source of beings, the Inexhaustible Repository; one who comes into being as He pleases, the Benefactor, the Protector, One whose birth is unique, the Capable, the Master; the Self-born, the Giver of happiness, the Solar deity, the Lotus-eyed, the Speaker of the sublime sound named Veda, One without birth or death, the Primary Creator and the Subsidiary Creator (Brahma) and One beyond even the Primary Creator; the Inscrutable, the Lord of the senses, He who has the Lotus (with Brahma) in his navel,[2] the God of the gods, the Divine Architect, the Thinker or the Sage-Lawgiver Manu, the heavenly Architect Tvashtar, the Huge, the Aged, the Firm; the Incomprehensible, the Permanent, the Attractive Krishna, the bright-eyed, the Destroyer, the Ample; existing above, below and in the middle; the Supreme Sanctifier and Auspiciousness; the Controller, the Life-giver, the Life-breath, the Eldest, the Best, the Lord of beings, the primordial Creator, He who has the whole Earth within Himself, the Scion of the Madhu race and Killer of the demon Madhu; the Powerful Lord, wielder of the bow; the Intelligent; Power and Order; the Unexcelled, the Unassailable, the Grateful, the Act, the Self-possessed; the God of gods, the Refuge, Happiness, the Author of the universe, the Source of all Beings, the Day, the Year, the Great Serpent (of the form of Time),[3] Understanding, All-seeing; the Un-

[1] See the Prahlada story in the Bhagavata above; for all such names referring to the Lord's incarnations, see above, the stories of the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata.

[2] The Lord lies on the primeval waters and out of his navel rises a lotus; from the lotus issues forth the primary creator (Brahma) and from Him, the universe. See the Bhagavata, p. 358.

[3] The Lord lies on the couch made of the coils of the divine

born, the Lord of all, Endowed with miraculous powers, Himself those miraculous powers, the First of all, the Stable, He who took the form of the Boar of *Dharma*,[1] the Immeasurable, One who has transcended all associations; Wealth, Endowed with an excellent heart, Truth, Serene, Equal, the Unfailing, the Lotus-eyed, the Righteously Active, the Embodiment of Righteousness; the Terrible, the Multi-headed, the Tawny One, the Origin of the universe, of Unstained Fame, Immortal, Eternal, Steadfast, of Excellent limbs and severe penance; Omnipotent, Omniscient, the Shining One whose hosts are everywhere, the chastiser of the erring folk, the Veda, the Expounder of the Veda, the Full, the Ancillary Lore of the Veda, the Inquirer into the Veda and One of far-reaching vision; One who presides over the world, the gods and law; the created Effect as well as the uncreated Cause, Who takes four forms for creation, maintenance and dissolution, Who has four tusks (as the man-lion) and four arms; the Brilliant, the Food as well as the Eater, the Forbearing, First-born of the world, the Sinless, the Victory and the Victorious, the Source of the universe and One who repeatedly comes to dwell within beings; Indra's brother[2] and yet above him, the Dwarf as well as the Colossus, the Successful, the Pure, the Strong, the Epitome of (all) Creation, Self-possessed, Regulation and Restraint; the Object of Knowledge, the Learned, ever a Yogin, the Slayer of heroic fighters, the Lord of spiritual learning, the Sweet, One who transcends the senses and is endowed with mysterious power, of high endeavour and mighty strength; endowed with supreme Intellect,

Serpent, Sesha or Ananta who symbolises limitless time. These forms of the Lord, as Padmanabha and Anantasayana, are associated with some of the most popular temples, the ones at Trivandrum and Srirangam.

[1] This refers to the incarnation of the Lord as the Boar (*Varaha*); See above the Bhagavata story, p. 358.

[2] Upendra, the Lord's incarnation as Vamana. See p. 376.

Potency, Power and Lustre; of Indescribable Form, the Beautiful, the Vast, the Supporter of the great mountain;[1] the Great Archer, the Lord of Earth, the Abode of Fortune, the Refuge of the good, the Irrepressible, the Delight of the good, the Saviour of the earth, the Chief of those that understand Speech; the Ray of Light (or sage Marichi), the Controller, the Swan of the Spirit, the fleet divine Bird (Garuda),[2] the Chief Serpent (Sesha), of golden navel, of excellent austerities, the Lotus on His navel and Brahma (thereon); Immortal, Spectator of everything, the Fierce, the Link, Linked (with all), the Enduring, the Unborn, the Unbearable, the Ruler, the Celebrated, the Slayer of the enemies of the gods; the Teacher, the Most Weighty One, Light, Truth, One who displays His valour on behalf of Truth, the Moment, the Vigilant, the Garlanded, the Lord of Speech and One of Sublime Intellect; the Foremost, the Chief, the Rich, the Right Path, the Leader, the Inspirer; the Thousand-headed, Thousand-eyed, Thousand-footed, Embodiment of the universe; He who rotates the whole world, yet keeping Himself aloof from it; the Hidden one, Overriding all, the Day, the Deluge, Fire, Wind and Mountain; the Supremely Gracious, the Tranquil, the Prop as well as the Consumer of the Universe, the All-pervading; the Bestower of honour, the Honoured and the Good; Who draws and hides within Himself the whole Universe, the God who is the Goal of man and the Man himself; the Innumerable, the Unknowable, the Unique, the Patron of disciplined souls, the Spotless, One whose objects and wishes are fulfilled, One who gives success and is also the means of success; One for whom Righteousness constitutes the day, Who showers the desired

[1] The Mandara mountain, in the Tortoise-incarnation during the churning of the ocean for nectar; or the Govardhana mountain, in the Krishna-incarnation, or merely the God on whom all the great mountains of the world rest.

[2] The vehicle of the Lord, symbolic of the revelation (*Veda*).

objects, of giant stride, One who is to be reached by the steps of *dharma* and who is within *dharma*; the Promoter of growth and the Growing, Who is far apart, Who is the ocean of revealed wisdom; of beautiful arms (that protect), whose thought is too difficult to be retained, the Eloquent, the Great Indra, the Bestower of Riches; of manifold and huge form, the Sacrifice and the Revealer; Bearer of Force, Power and Effulgence, Embodiment of Light, the Scorcher, Rich (in everything), the Manifester of syllables and the Sacred Syllables themselves, Moonlike as well as Sunlike in splendour; the Source of ambrosial rays, Himself both the Sun and the Moon, the King of gods, the Medicine, the Protective Embankment of the world, One whose valour is exercised for Truth and Righteousness; the Lord of the past, present and future, the Wind, the Purifier, the Fire, the Destroyer of lust, the Promoter of noble love, the Loveable, the Lover that gratifies with love; the Promulgator of æons, the Conductor of æonic cycles, of manifold mystic powers, the All-devouring, the Unseen, of Unmanifest form, Victor over thousands and the Endlessly Victorious; the Desirable, the Remarkable, Dear to those that conform to His commandments, Krishna who wears the peacock-feather on His crest (or the Sikhandin who has come as my Death),[1] the Encircler, *Dharma*, the Destroyer of anger, at the same time its Employer, and the Doer, with a thousand arms, and Bearer of the earth; the Unflinching, the Famous, the Life and Life-giver, Indra's brother, the Ocean, the Substratum, the Vigilant one who is firmly established; the Destroyer (of enemies), the Supporter of such destroyers and Himself the Bearer of the brunt; the Bestower of boons; the Mover of Wind; the Lord in whom all dwell

[1] Bhishma being the speaker of the Hymn and his fall having been brought about by the Pandavas through Sikhandin, this second meaning is also appropriate. See above, the story of the Mahabharata, p. 335.

and who dwells in all; the Bigger Sun, the Prime God, and the Destroyer of enemy cities; the Sorrowless, He who helps to cross over, the Crossing over (or the Mystic syllable *OM*), the Valorous, the Scion of the Surasenas (Krishna), the King, the Favourable, Who returns to us innumerable times, the God with the lotus and the lotus-eyes; Who is seated at the centre of the lotus, the Lotus-eyed Lord who is within the lotus of one's heart, who takes corporeal forms, the greatly Affluent, the Full, the Old, the Large-eyed, the God with the kite-banner; the Incomparable, the Fierce Being that excels even the lion; the Knower of the esoteric practices (or Knower of propriety), the Offering, the Lord who strips one and tests him, Marked with all features of beauty, Bearing the Goddess of Beauty, the Victor in battles; the Imperishable, He who took the Fish-incarnation, the Path, the Cause, One in whom all Names are included, Endowed with endurance, Bearer of earth, of great fortune, the Swift, the limitless Consumer; the Origin, One that stirs up the Creative Activity, the Sportive, Bearer of Prosperity, the Lord Supreme, the Instrument and the Cause, the Doer and the Undoer, the Dense and the Secret; Determination, the Regulator, the End, the Bestower of rank, the Stable, Supreme Prosperity, the Absolutely obvious, the Contented, the Well-nourished, having auspicious looks; the Delighter, the Final end (of all), Free from passion, the Path and the Goal, the Right Policy, and at the same time Himself the Sovereign, not subject to any; the Hero, Best of all the powerful, *Dharma*, and Foremost of the knowers of *dharma*; the Unimpeded Heavenly State, the Supreme Spirit, Life and Life-giver, the Mystic *OM*, the Vast, the Creator (Brahma), Slayer of enemies, the All-pervading, the Wind; He who is realised when the senses are subdued; the Season; Beautiful to look at, Time; the transcendent Lord who yet receives all supplicants, the Severe, He

who makes everything abide in Himself, the Capable, Who affords repose to the afflicted, and One who is considerate to the whole world; the Expansive, He who stands stationary, the Measure, the Seed that is not spent, the Purpose (of all endeavour) but Himself devoid of any purpose of His own, the Great Treasury, the Great Enjoyer, the highly wealthy; the Undepressed, the most Expansive, Existence, the Sacrificial Post at which all meritorious acts are offered, the Great Sacrifice, the Hub of the wheel of constellations, the Moon, the Adept, Stript of all encrustations, of noble aspirations; the Sacrifices of different forms and Himself the minor gods and the Chief God propitiated by sacrifices; the Refuge of the good; One who notes everything, the Liberated Soul, the Omniscient and the Supreme Wisdom; He who takes excellent vows, of beautiful face, the Subtle, the Fine-voiced, the Giver of happiness, the Friend, the Captivating, One who has conquered anger, of heroic arms and One who tears to pieces (the unrighteous); He who makes the unenlightened slumber in His mystic Delusion, Master of Himself, the Ubiquitous, of manifold forms and acts, the Year, the Affectionate, Surrounded by His children, the source of all precious things, the Lord of riches; the Safeguarder of *dharma*, the Maker of *dharma*, Himself endowed with *Dharma*, Himself Good and Bad, the Perishable and the Imperishable, who becomes the unknowing embodied individual Soul; the Thousand-rayed, the Performer of functions, and the Author who has laid down the definitions; Centre of an orb of rays, the Spirit that presides over the mind, Lion-like in strength, the great Lord of beings, the First God, the Great God, the God of gods, the Bearer of gods, and the Teacher; the Superior, the Shepherd, the Protector, Realisable by knowledge, the Ancient, the Bearer of the bodies of the beings, the Enjoyer of (everything), the great Boar-incarnation, the profusely Liberal; the

Drinker of Soma offering and of nectar, the Soma offering, Victor over many, Foremost among the eminent, Modesty, Victory, the Truthful, Scion of Dasarha race[1] and the Lord of the Sattvata people[2] (or worshippers); the Individual Soul, the Observer of individuals' humility, Bestower of Release, the immeasurably Powerful, the Reservoir of different orders of beings, the Spirit without any limitation, He who lies on the great Ocean after engulfing the world with it, the Terminator of the world; the Unborn, Fit to be worshipped, Existing in His own innate nature, One who has vanquished his enemies, the Rejoicer, Bliss, the pleasing and Gratifying, Of true virtue, He who measured the universe in three strides; the Great Sage and Teacher (of Samkhya) Kapila, the Knower of the created, the King, He who covered the universe in three steps, the Lord of the gods, He who incarnated as the Fish with the huge snout,[3] the Death of the god of Death; the Great Boar-incarnation, Known through the Upanishads, Possessed of an excellent army, Having golden armlets, Dwelling in the heart, the Deep, the Impenetrable, the Hidden, Bearing the discus and the mace; Brahma the Creator, Himself His accessory, the Unconquered, Sage Vyasa,[4] the Strong, One who unfailingly drags beings away at the time of destruction, Varuna the Lord of Waters, Sage Vasishtha, Standing like a tree, Seen in the lotus of one's heart, Himself of a great mind; Possessed of Lordship, *Dharma*, Renown, Beauty, Dispassion, and Freedom or He who knows the origin and end, the movement and rest of beings, Knowledge and Nescience, He who deprives one also of these excellences; the Joyous, the Wearer of a garland of sylvan flowers, Armed with the plough,[5] the God, the Re-

[1-2] Names of the clans among whom the Lord incarnated as Krishna.

[3] The first of the incarnations of the Lord.

[4] Author of the Epic in which this Hymn occurs and editor of the Vedas and Puranas.

[5] That is, identical with His brother Balarama in the Krishna-

splendent Sun-god, the Patient, the Supreme Path to salvation; Possessing an excellent bow, Siva armed with the axe, the Awful, the Giver of wealth, Heaven-stretching, the codifier of all systems of knowledge, the Self-born Lord of Speech; Lauded by three (special) Saman hymns, Himself the Saman chant and its Singer, the Beatific end, the Remedy and the Doctor, the Promulgator of the Path of Renunciation, Quietude and the Quiet, the Final Rest, Peace, the Highest Refuge; of Beautiful form, Bestower of peace, the Creator, He who revels in his creation, Who reposes in the lily of the heart, Benefactor of the wòrld, Lord of the world, He who shrouds Himself in His Mystic Power, Having eyes that rain one's desired objects, Lover of *dharma*; He who does not retreat, Whose mind is turned inwards on the Self, Who gathers up all things at the dissolution, Who brings on welfare, the Beneficent, Bearing the auspicious mark of *Srivatsa*[1] on His chest, the abode of the Goddess of prosperity, Lord of Supreme Energy, Chief of the gods that are endowed with power; Giver, Master, Abode, Repository, Producer, Bearer, Author and Maintainer of Prosperity; the Supreme Good and the Prop of the three worlds; of beautiful eyes and limbs, of joys, the Rejoicer, the Lord of the luminaries, of controlled and disciplined Self, of unsullied fame, the Dispeller of doubts; the Excelling, Possessed of eyes all round, He who has no master, Frequently changing and yet stationary, Reposing in earth (Immanent in His creation), the Ornament, Affluence, without Sorrow and the Destroyer of sorrow; having rays of light, Worshipped by all, the Vessel within which everything is, the Pure Soul, the Purifier, the Unobstructed and Unopposed Hero, of superior energy, of unlimited valour; the Killer of the

incarnation.

[1] This is an auspicious mark of the form of a curl of hair on the chest of the Lord, in His personal form.

demon Kalanemi, the Heroic, the Scion and chief of the Sura tribe,[1] of the form of the three worlds, Lord of the three worlds, Endowed with power, Slayer of the demon Kesin, the Lord who removes bondage; the Lord of love, the Guardian of love, the Loving, the Lovable, the Promulgator of the spiritual tradition, Of undefinable form, the All-pervading Lord, the Unlimited, the Acquirer of riches; Favourable to the Brahmanas, the Promulgator of penance and knowledge, the Creator, the Supreme Soul, the Promoter of Brahman-knowledge, Knower of Brahman, of the form of the Brahmana, Possessor of the knowledge of Brahman, Knower of the source of knowledge (*Veda*) and the Beloved of the Brahmanas; of giant strides and acts, the Superior Light, the Great Serpent, the Great Sacrifice, Sacrificer and Oblation; He who is to be praised, Who loves praises, the Praises, Himself the Praiser, Who loves to fight, the Full, the Filler, the Holy, of virtuous fame; Free from all disease; Fleet as the mind, the Maker of holy places, the Wealth-bearing, the Bestower of the higher wealth of Deliverance, the Son of Vasudeva,[2] the Precious thing, Possessed of precious heart, the Offering; the Meritorious Path, Honour, Existence, Right Being, the Refuge of the good, having heroic hosts, the Chief of the Yadava clan,[3] the Abode of the good, He who had beautiful associations on the Yamuna; the dwelling-place of beings, Lord Vasudeva, the Repository of the Breath of all living beings, One for whom there is no sufficiency in anything; Humbler of haughtiness, Bestower of rightful pride, Himself elated in His own bliss, One whom it is difficult to hold within one's heart, the Invincible; Who is of all forms, of huge form, of resplendent form, Devoid of form and at the

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[1] and [3] Clans among whom the Lord incarnated as Krishna.

[2] In the Krishna incarnation.

same time taking manifold forms, the Latent, of a hundred forms and a hundred faces; the One, the Many, the Sacrifice, the Highest import of the words "Who," "What," and "That which"; Father of the world, Besought by the world, Scion of the Madhu race,[1] Affectionate to His devotees; of golden hue and limbs, of excellent limbs, of pleasing ornaments on the arm, the Slayer of warriors, the Difficult, Void of all attributes, One who has quenched desires, the Immobile and the Mobile; without pride or false assumptions, Bestower of honour, the Honoured, the Owner of the world, the Bearer of the three worlds, of sublime Intellect, Manifested in the sacrifice, He whose objects are fulfilled, the truly Intelligent, the Support of the earth; the Fountainhead of light, Possessing splendour, Eminent among those bearing arms, the Reins of control, Control, the (always) Preoccupied, of many high reaches (*i.e.*, many exalted aspects), the Elder brother of Gada[2]; of four forms, four arms, four manifestations; the Resort of all the four castes of mankind, the Accomplished, Being in the four states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the fourth beyond them, the Knower of the four Vedas, of Whom all that exists is but a fraction; Who returns to the world again and again and thus retires not, the Unconquerable, He who cannot be transgressed, Hard to be attained and known, realised and held in mind with difficulty, the Slayer of the evil-minded foes; of auspicious form, He who takes the essence of things in the world, Who extends Himself gloriously and Himself snaps that extension, doing sovereign and great duty, Who has regulated the acts appropriate to each, the Author of scriptures; of special birth, the Beautiful, of melting heart, the precious Hub which holds together everything, of auspicious thought, the

[1] One of the clans among whom the Lord incarnated as Krishna.
[2] A younger brother in the Krishna-incarnation of the Lord.

Adored, the Giver of food, the Snouted-Fish-incarnation, He who vanquishes even the most learned; Golden-bodied, the Unperturbed, Lord of all lords of speech, the Deep Lake, the Deep Pit, the Great Being, the Great Treasure; He who gladdens the earth and tears it up as well, (pure and fragrant) like a jasmine, Cloud of coolness and plenty, the Sanctifier, the Breath, Who drinks nectar, Whose body is immortal, All-knowing and All-facing; Easy, of noble Vow, the Realised Soul, the Victor over foes, the Tormenter of foes, the Huge Banyan, the Udumbara tree (like unto whose fruit that contains a host of flies inside, Who holds within Himself the whole living world), the Sacred Pipal,[1] the Slayer of the demons Chanura and Agha[2]; the Thousand-rayed, the Seven-tongued Fire,[3] the State of Sublimity which is fed by the seven fuels, namely, fortitude, forgiveness, mercy, purity, prosperity, soft speech and non-enmity towards beings; Borne on the sacred Vedic hymns in seven metres,[4] Devoid of form, Impeccable, Unimaginable, the Inspirer of fear as well as its destroyer; the Great One who is the Infinitesimal and the Infinite, the Lean and the Stout, the Qualified and the Unqualified, the Unsupported and Self-supported; of a beautiful mouth (wherefrom the Vedas issued); Forefather of all families and the multiplier of all families; Bearer of burdens, Proclaimed (in the Vedas), who is always engaged in Yoga and is the Lord of those that practise it, the Bestower of all desires, the four Stages of life[5] and He who toils therein and is emancipated thereby, the Tree with the rich foliage of all

[1] The Banyan (The Indian fig tree, *Ficus Indica*), the Pipal (*Ficus Religiosa*) and the Udumbara (*Ficus Glomerata*) are trees which frequently occur as symbols in descriptions of the Lord.

[2] See above, the Bhagavata, pp. 384, 390.

[3] In which offerings are made to the Lord.

[4] Seven are the main metres occurring in the Vedic hymns.

[5] The *Asramas*: Studentship, Domestic Life, Retirement, and Renunciation.

the worlds, Who is borne fleet on the Wind; the Bearer of the bow and the science of archery; the Punishment, the Punisher and the Subjugation; the Unvanquished, the All-enduring, the Controller, the Controlling rule and the Control; Possessed of the luminous quality,[1] the Good, the True, Intent on the True and Righteous, the Object of all seeking, Deserving of all pleasing things, Deserving adoration, the Doer of the pleasant and the Promoter of endearment; Moving in the skies, the Light, Shining beautifully, the Enjoyer of oblations, the Omnipresent, the Sun that absorbs water, shines in varied hues, urges and produces; and the God who has the Sun as His eye; the Endless, the Enjoyer of oblations, the Enjoyer (of all things), Giver of happiness, Born of many (in his incarnations for the protection of righteousness), Elder to all, He who is never despondent, Ever forbearing, the Foundation of the world, the Wonderful; the Old and Existing from ancient times, the Tawny, the Sun, He into whom creation dissolves at the deluge; Bestower of welfare, Maker of welfare, Welfare, Enjoyer of welfare and Capable Promoter of welfare; Devoid of severity, Adorned with earrings, Bearing the discus, Overpowering, of forceful ordinances, Transcending verbal knowledge and source, (yet) permitting verbal account; the Cool, the Bringer of the Night of Soul; not Cruel,[2] the Delicate, the Capable, the Considerate, the Most Forbearing, the Most Learned, the Fearless, He whose praises it is holy to listen to or sing; He who helps men to cross over transmigratory existence, the Destroyer of evil acts, of the form of Merit, the Destroyer of evil dreams, the Annihilator of warriors, the Protector, of the form of all the good souls, the Life of all beings, Established all round; of endless forms, of endless for-

[1] Of the three qualities (*Gunas*), *Sattva* is light, *Rajas* is passion and *Tamas* is delusion; the Lord is associated only with the first.

[2] Or of the form of Akrura, one of the Lord's best devotees in the Krishna-incarnation.

tune, One who has conquered anger, the Dispeller of fear, the Perfect, the Profound, the Director, the Commander, the Various Quarters (*i.e.*, of the form of Space); without Beginning, the Imparter of Beauty to the terrestrial and celestial worlds, the Excellent Hero with beautiful armlets, Birth, the Primary source of humanity, the Terrible, of terrible Prowess; the Station of support, Himself unsupported by any, Smiling like a flower, the Ever awake, the Upwardly progressive, the Conduct of the righteous path, Giver of Life, the Lauded, the Guarantee (of fruits of actions); the Authority, the Abode of Life, the Sustainer of Life, Life of Life, the Truth, the Knower of Truth, the sole Soul, He who is beyond birth, death and old age; the Tree that pervades the three worlds of earth, ether and heaven, He who reaches beyond them too, the Father and the Great-grandfather, the Sacrifice, the Lord of the sacrifice, the Sacrificing Priest, the Sacrificial accessories, and Borne by the Sacrifice; the Bearer of the Sacrifice, the Performer of the Sacrifice, the aim of all Sacrifice, the Enjoyer of Sacrifice, the means of Sacrifice, He who brings Sacrifice to an end, the esoteric Sacrifice of Knowledge; the Food and indeed the Consumer of all as food; Himself His source, Voluntarily manifested, Who penetrates (as indweller of all beings or as the Boar-incarnation to salvage the submerged earth), the Singer of Saman symphonies (in the plenitude of freedom),[1] the son of Devaki,[2] the Creator, the King, the Destroyer of sins; He who holds the Conch, the Sword, the Discus, the Bow and the Mace, the Discus-armed, the Unperturbed, He who can use anything as a weapon for striking.[3]

[1] See above the end of the Taittiriya Upanishad where the liberated Soul is said to revel in its own joy, singing Saman-music. (p. 77).

[2] In the Krishna-incarnation.

[3] As the Hymn ends, Bhishma, its speaker, descends from the transcendental aspect to the personal form of Krishna in which God was sitting in front of him; the final repeated reference to his discus-arm

Thus these Thousand from among the divine Names of the Great Kesava, fit to be sung, have been fully told. He who listens to this or recites it daily shall encounter nothing untoward here or in the hereafter.* * * In the blessed who are devoted to the Supreme Lord, there will be no anger, no jealousy, no avarice, no evil thought.* * *

2. Kulasekhara: The Mukundamala

(A most popular hymn on Vishnu; the author is revered oftentimes as identical with the Royal Vaishnavite Saint (Alvar) of that name.)

I have no desire to perform *dharma* or for the accumulation of wealth or for the enjoyment of desires. Whatever is in store, let it, O Lord, happen according to my previous acts. This, which I value, is what I pray for: "In my next and further births too, may I be firmly devoted to your lotus-feet."

That Lord Narayana triumphs, without the constant thought of whose lotus-feet the recital of scriptures becomes a cry in the wilderness, daily austerities and vows useful only as exercises for reducing one's weight, all public benefactions, oblations on ashes (not on fire), and ablution in holy waters as useless as the bath of the elephant.[1]

3. Krishna-Lila-Suka: The Krishnakarnamrita

(Author also known as Bilvamangala; a fabled South Indian Saint-devotee of Krishna; this hymn of his on Krishna is also highly prized by the Chaitanya Vaishnavites of Bengal.)

Extend to me your grace with your sweet glances closely following the music of your flute; if you become gracious, what need have we for others? And if you are

recalls how the Lord, with his discus eventually had rushed at Bhishma, on the battlefield; see above the Mahabharata, p. 334.

[1] "The elephant-bath," is a byword; the elephant bathes and immediately takes the dust of the street and throws it over its own head.

not gracious, what need have we, then also, for others? (1.29)

Like the rising sun in darkness, like a boat to the shipwrecked, like a sweet rain-cloud to the thirsty, like a treasure to the pauper, like a physician to those in chronic and acute malady, Krishna comes to us to grant us welfare. (III. 95).

4. Yamunacharya: The Stotraratna

(An 11th-century South Indian Srivaishnava teacher; grand-preceptor of Sri Ramanujacharya who established the school of Vedanta according to which the one Supreme Being is a Personality endowed with attributes (*Visishtadvaita*). Referred to in Tamil as Alavandar. His hymn, Stotraratna (meaning, 'gem of a hymn,' and referred to also as the Alavandar-stotra) enjoys wide popularity among Srivaishnavas.)

I have not established myself in righteousness; I have not known the Self nor have I devotion to your lotus-feet. Bereft of everything, bereft of other resort, I take refuge at your feet, O Protector of those who take refuge in you!

There is no reproachful act in the world which I have not done a thousand times; now when the time of dire retribution has come, I, without any other resort, cry unto you, O Mukunda!

Even if you repudiate me, I cannot forsake, O Great Lord, your lotus-feet. Even if brushed aside in anger, the suckling baby would never leave its mother's feet.

What I have, O Lord Madhava, and what I am, all that is indeed yours. Or, having realised well that all this is by right your own, what shall I offer you?

5. Ramanujacharya: The Gadyatraya

(The author died in 1137 A.D.; founder of Visishtadvaita Vedanta.)

You alone are the Mother, you alone the Father,

you alone the kinsman, you alone the Teacher; you alone are learning and wealth. O Lord of Lords, you are everything to me.

6. VENKATANATHA VEDANTA DESIKA

(1268 to 1369 A.D. Most prolific and versatile author of the Visishtadvaita School.)

THE NYASADASAKA

(On surrender and the laying of all burden on the Lord.)

Myself and everything belonging to me, sentient and insentient, accept, O Lord, the bestower of boons, as the materials of your service!

I can be saved by you alone, O abode of compassion! You yourself prevent my committing any more sins and forgive the sins that I have already done!

THE ASHTABHUJASHTAKA

I depend only on you, O Lord of Lakshmi,[1] and of your own accord you must protect me. If you move in the matter, what need is there for my endeavours? If you do not move in the matter, of what avail are my endeavours?

7. CHAITANYA DEVA (GAURANGA): THE SIKSHASHTAKA

(Born at Navadvipa in Bengal in 1485 A.D. Founder of the Vaishnava sect named after him.)

When will my eyes stream with tears at the mention of Your Name, my throat become parched and my body become thrilled?

When I am separated from the Lord Govinda, a minute becomes an æon, the eyes rain tears and the whole world becomes empty.

[1] The consort of Lord Vishnu; the Goddess of Prosperity.

III. DEVI

1. THE DEVI MAHATMYA (CALLED ALSO DURGA-SAPTASATI AND CHANDI) (THE GLORY OF THE MOTHER GODDESS)

(From the Markandeya Purana. This hymn on the Mother is sung by the gods on Her slaying the demon Mahisha; Chapter IV, verses 3, 5, 9, 11, 15, 17 and 21.)

The Goddess who has spread this world by her own power, which is the embodiment of the united powers of the entire world of gods, that Mother, worthy of the worship of all the gods and the great sages, we bow to in devotion; may She extend to us auspicious things.

You who are yourself the prosperity in the mansions of the virtuous, the indigence of the sinful, the judgment in the heart of those of disciplined minds, the faith of the good and the modesty of the well-bred, to you we have bowed; Goddess, protect the world!

You are, O blessed Goddess! that spiritual wisdom which is the cause of emancipation, which is accompanied by the observance of the inscrutable great vows (non-violence, truth, honesty, continence and abstention from receiving anything for oneself, observed irrespective of circumstantial difficulties) and which is cultivated by those in silent meditation who, desirous of release, control their senses completely and concentrate on Truth and have cast aside all evil.

O Goddess! You are the Intellect (Sarasvati) which knows the essence of all sciences; you are Durga, the ship that lightly takes us across the insurmountable sea of transmigratory existence; you are Lakshmi abiding in the heart of Vishnu; you are Gauri established in (the body of) Siva.[1]

[1] The three Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvati, consorts of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma and presiding deities over Power, Prosperity and Learning, are all embodied in the one Mother Goddess.

They are the honoured of the land; riches and renown are theirs; their kith and kin do not come to grief; they are the blessed enjoying well-behaved sons, servants and wives,—they to whom You have extended Your grace and permanent prosperity.

O Durga! If You are remembered, You remove the fear of all beings; remembered by those who are in safety, You give them an exceedingly auspicious mind; O destroyer of the fear and misery of indigence! Whose heart but yours always drips with compassion for rendering every kind of help and to everybody?

Goddess! Your conduct puts down the bad conduct of the bad; this incomparable form of Yours is inscrutable to others; Your valour is the destroyer of the enemies of the gods; You have thus shown Your compassion even to those opposed to You.

2. Sri Sankaracharya: The Saundaryalahari

(O Mother!) Let whatever I utter be your prayer; let all skillful acts of my hands be the mystic gestures of your worship; let all my movements be coming round you in devotion; let all my eating and drinking be oblation offered to you; let my lying down be prostration to you; let all enjoyment of happiness be in the spirit of offering myself to you; whatever my act, let it be a synonym of your service. (27)

3. The Devi Panchastavi: The Sakalajananistava (Hymn on the Mother of All)

One never knows when, how and where this body would become food for dogs or fire or birds; O mind, give up soon your faith in this body of mine, and take refuge only in the Mother of all. (7)

When father, mother, brother, friend, servant, house, wife, body, lands, companions and wealth give me up, then, O Mother, appear before me, in your kindness,

destroying, O great Moonlight, the dense darkness of fear and delusion. (37)

4. MUKA KAVI: THE PANCHASATI (THE FIVE HUNDRED VERSES)

(On Goddess Kamakshi at Kanchipuram.)

We gloat not over riches, we do not dance attendance on wicked men; we are not prey to fickle desire; we are not oppressed by the fear of life; firmly do we adore in our minds the sprout-like feet of the Beloved of Siva, delighting at Kanchi. (Stuti-sataka, 85).

IV. SIVA

1. PUSHPADANTA: THE SIVAMAHIMNASTAVA

For men, who, because of the variety of their tastes, take to diverse paths,—the three Vedas, Samkhya, Yoga, Saivism and Vaishnavism—and claim that among the different approaches one is superior and another is wholesome, you are the one goal to be reached, even as the ocean is for all waters.[1] (7)

2. KASHMIR SAIVA HYMNS

(Kashmir Saivism, in the building up of which some of the most gifted Sanskrit savants took part from about the 8th to about the 13th century A.D., is a system of philosophy, religion and esoteric and reconciliatory metaphysical positions, appealing in its devotional fervour and æsthetic orientations. The hymns of its followers, as important as its scholarly treatises, are much less known than the latter. Here are given extracts from three choice representatives of this class.)

[1] An utterance at once characteristic of the tolerance of Hinduism and the unity underlying its diversity. A shorter verse on the same idea, with the same simile of the rivers and the sea, is recited at the end of the daily *Sandhya* prayers.

(a) BHATTA NARAYANA: THE STAVACHINTAMANI
(9th century A.D.)

Obeisance to the immovable Lord, subtler than even the half *mora* above the mystic syllable *OM*, greater than even the cosmos and having the quality of being unqualified! (7)

Dedicating unto You the expressions of our speech, mind and body, could we ever become one with You and be rid of the opposites (of pleasure and pain)? (17)

What path is there by which You cannot be reached? What word is there by which You are not meant? What thought is there by which you cannot be contemplated upon? O Lord, what is there that is not You? (21)

Having thought, in the fickleness of my mind, of innumerable things to be done, I (now) rest, O Siva, basking in the bliss of your consciousness in intense delight. (38)

If You are subtle, how is it that the three worlds are but a fraction of You; If You are gross, O Lord, how is it You are not easily visible even to Brahma and other gods? (39)

Were it not that You alone are the meaning to be conveyed by all this, which wise man, O Lord! would trouble himself with this verbiage? (40)

What fault is it, O God, even if it be one, which has been resorted to for attaining You? And what merit is it, even if it be one, which has not been resorted to for attaining You? (47)

Let me even have attachment, O Lord of the world, if the attachment is exclusively fixed on You; and salutations even to that greed of mine which has You for its object! (48)

A mounting relish that expands a thousandfold, this, O Lord, is not seen anywhere else except in the ambrosial delectation of your devotion. (51)

Master, whatever the direction, there is no place where You are not; Time is Your form; grasped though You are in this manner, where and when could You be reached? Tell me! (57)

Oh, You are that Lord by being dedicated to whom even an inferior act becomes supreme; and You are the Lord from whom the goodness of the good act is also derived. (68)

In qualities, who is superior to You? In freedom from them (too), who is superior to You? We do not know whether, by saying this, O Lord, we are praising or abusing You. (97)

To my mind, O Lord, which is moving in that effulgence of yours which is the light of all lights, even a trace of darkness is, I think, an impossibility. (104)

Even defective forms of your artificial worship give rise to the fruit of your true realisation; if this worship is ideal, how it will fructify, You yourself must say. (106)

That is vision by which You are seen; that is activity by which You are reached; and that is fruit, O Eternal Lord, which springs from the celestial tree of inquiry for You. (109)

'I am fortunate,' 'I have achieved,' 'I am great'—such an assumption will indeed be well-founded, O Lord, for him who has laid his foundation in You. (115)

(b) Utpaladeva: The Sivastotravali

(10th century A.D.)

When all the world is of your own form, what place is not a holy shrine to your devotees, and where will not their recitals of *mantras* fructify? (I. 4)

I shout, I dance, my wishes are fulfilled, now that You, my Lord, extremely pleasing to me, have been secured! (III. 11)

With my eyes closed in the inner delectation of the beauty of your devotion, may I remain saying, "Obeisance to me, Siva," and worshipping even blades of grass! (V. 15)

My Lord! In brief, this is the definition for me of happiness and misery: Union with You is happiness; separation from You, the Lord, is misery. (XIII. 1)

To me, filled with your devotion, let there be even the visitation of calamity; may there not be even a succession of happy events opposed to your devotion. (XVI. 20)

As You are the birthplace of all beauty, whatever is placed on You becomes invaluable, be it a gem or a blade of grass. (XVI. 26)

For those who are rich with the wealth of devotion, what else is there to beg for? and for those who are destitute of it, what is there to beg for? (XX. 11)

(c) CHAKRAPANINATHA: THE BHAVOPAHARA
(11th century A.D.?)

Though you transcend all qualities and though you are beyond the grasp of even the Lord of Speech, I am not to be blamed in any respect if my voice rises ever and anon from the very depths of my being to praise you, for, O Omnipresent Lord, this voice itself being completely lost in the bliss of your exceeding devotion, is prompted only by You. (4—5)

Bathing in the internal *Tirtha*,[1] the lake of my own being, resorted to by the *yogins*, and wearing the pure garment of knowledge, I worship the Lord of the blue throat.[2] (7)

[1] A sacred river or lake where a bath is meritorious.

[2] Nilakantha, a name of Siva who saved the universe by Himself drinking the deadly poison which was about to annihilate the world. See the story in the *Bhagavata* above, p. 374.

O Lord of Speech! I worship You with the hymn-flowers of the threefold Speech, laden with the fragrance of consciousness and blooming in the garden of the transcendent state. (21)

Overcome by the bliss of becoming yourself, and maddened by the intoxication of the dance, I am shouting in the realm of esoteric meditation. Wherefore should I think of extraneous objects? (33)

The faggots of impressions accumulating from the distinction of the enjoyed and the enjoyer, I offer as oblation in the non-dual fire of Sankara, inside, the abode of welfare. (40)

Placing in the vessel of the lotus-palm of the Goddess of Release the finely prepared life of mine as the supreme gift, I offer it to You, O Lord! (43)

V. SOME COMMON CHARACTERISTIC PRAYERS

1. THE GURU (THE TEACHER)

(Whatever the sect of Hinduism, the faith in a living teacher is of fundamental importance. Not the mere book-knowledge, but what a preceptor of realisation imparts directly to a true disciple,—a branch of learning, a mode of *Sadhana* or a *mantra*—becomes effective. The following three verses on the *Guru* generally precede all recitals.)

The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru is Siva; the Guru is the supreme Godhead itself in the visible form; Obeisance to that Guru.

He who has the highest devotion to God and has to his Guru the same devotion that he has to God, to that great soul these things which have been taught, and indeed those too which remain to be taught expressly, reveal themselves.

Obeisance to that blessed Guru, who, with the balmy ointment of knowledge, opened my eyes blinded with the darkness of ignorance.

2. Purity

(Personal purity being a prerequisite of all religious rites and devotional acts, bath is insisted upon; but it is not forgotten that the greater purity is of the mind, and only the all-purifying thought of God can give it. So, among the preliminary verses recited at the ceremonies, the following is included.)

Pure or impure, in whatever condition one might be, he who remembers the Lord, is pure within and without.

3. Auspiciousness

(For most functions, the auspicious times are fixed by elaborate consultations of planetary positions; but here again one does not forget that planetary powers are but an aspect of the Almighty and one never fails to say at the beginning of even acts begun after much consultation of planets:)

I fix my thoughts on the feet of the Lord; that itself is the auspicious moment; that itself is the lucky day; that itself is the strength of the stars and moon; that itself is the strength of Knowledge and Fate. The lucky day is Vishnu; the auspicious week is Vishnu; the lucky star is Vishnu; the correct part of the day is Vishnu; the whole world is Vishnu.

4. Many Sects But One Truth

He whom the Saivites worship as Siva (the Auspicious One), the Vedantins as the Absolute, the Bauddhas as the Buddha (the Enlightened One), the Logicians, experts in proofs, as the author of the world, those devoted to Jain doctrines as the Arhat (the Worthy), the Mimamsakas as ordained Duty,—May that Hari, the Lord of the three worlds, bestow on you the desired fruit.[1]

[1] A characteristic and very popular verse, typifying India's religious tolerance.

5. SERVICE TO THE SUFFERING

I desire not a kingdom, nor heaven nor emancipation from rebirth; I desire to relieve the suffering of those beings who are scorched by the fire of suffering.

6. DEDICATION

(Uttered at the close of all sacred acts.)

With the body, word, mind or senses, intellect, soul or by my own nature, whatever I do, I offer all to the supreme Narayana.

7. UNIVERSAL BENEDICTION

(Uttered at the end of all private readings and public recitals of epics and other sacred texts.)

May there be welfare for the people; may rulers protect the world, following the righteous path; to cows and Brahmans, may there always be good; may the whole world be happy.

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